



BI-WEEKLY TREATY REVIEW



12 August – 25 August 2008

DTRA

ARMS CONTROL (GENERAL)

Nuclear Group Delays Decision on India Trade Ban

Associated Press, 22 August 2008, <http://news.google.com/>

The global body that governs the legal trade in nuclear materials postponed a decision Friday [August 22] on whether to give New Delhi access to nuclear fuel and technology—a blow to a landmark deal between Washington and New Delhi. (537 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Japan, Australia to Co-Chair Nonproliferation Commission in October

Tokyo Kyodo World Service, 25 August 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Japan and Australia will jointly hold the first meeting of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament in October to discuss the controversial U.S.-India civil nuclear accord and global efforts to reinvigorate the nonproliferation regime, the co-chairs said Monday [August 25]. (707 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (BWC)

Biological Weapons Convention Expert Meeting Concludes

States News Service, 22 August 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The 2008 Meeting of Experts from States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was held in Geneva from 18 to 22 August 2008 to discuss and promote common understanding and effective action... (883 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)

End Looms for Action against Shipment of Chemical Weapons Waste

Defense Environment Alert, 19 August 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Activists may soon effectively be forced to end landmark litigation that challenged the legality of the Army's shipments of neutralized chemical weapons waste from Indiana across state lines for final disposal in Texas. (1134 words) [Click here for full text.](#)



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CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)(CONT.)

Sri Lanka to Host Asian Chemical Weapons Convention

Colombo Divaina, 20 August 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

The regional meeting of the National Authorities and Parliamentarians in Asia on the National Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention will be held on 25 and 26 August at the Hilton Hotel in Colombo. (146 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Weapons Destruction Deadline Looks Like a Reality

Richmond Register, 22 August 2008, <http://www.cwwg.org/>

The 2017 deadline for the destruction of chemical weapons stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot seems very feasible after news released Thursday [August 21] at a press conference in Richmond City Hall. (822 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST-BAN TREATY (CTBT)

Iraq Signs the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty

CTBTO, 20 August 2008, <http://www.ctbto.org/>

"We welcome the decision by Iraq to sign the CTBT," Tibor Tóth, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) said in a statement. (407 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

INTEGRATED SAFEGUARDS

Iran, IAEA to Continue Talks

GSN, 21 August 2008, <http://www.nti.org/>

Iran today [August 21] said it would continue discussing its nuclear program with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) following the nation's second round of talks this month with the U.N. nuclear watchdog, Agence France-Presse reported. (155 words) [Click here for full text.](#)



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OPEN SKIES TREATY

Russian Military Experts to Conduct Observation Flight over UK

Russia & CIS Military Newswire, 18 August 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Russian military will conduct an observation flight over the UK in a Swedish plane, a source in the Russian defense Ministry told Interfax on Monday [August 18]. (126 words)

[Click here for full text.](#)

U.S., Polish Military Inspectors Arrive at Baltic Fleet

Interfax-AVN, 21 August 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

A group of military inspectors from the U.S. and Poland have arrived at the Baltic Fleet under the Treaty on Open Skies, the Baltic Fleet press service reported on Thursday [August 21].

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

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Nuclear Group Delays Decision on India Trade Ban

Associated Press, 22 August 2008, <http://news.google.com/>

The global body that governs the legal trade in nuclear materials postponed a decision Friday [August 22] on whether to give New Delhi access to nuclear fuel and technology—a blow to a landmark deal between Washington and New Delhi.

The Nuclear Suppliers Group's approval of an exemption to its rules is essential for finalizing the civil nuclear cooperation deal. The pact would reverse more than three decades of U.S. policy by allowing the sale of nuclear materials to India, a country that has not signed international nonproliferation accords—and has tested nuclear weapons.

The 45-nation suppliers group said in a statement Friday that it will meet again soon to continue its deliberations on an agreement.

Earlier this month, India fulfilled one prerequisite for the deal by striking an inspections agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). After the NSG agrees to waive its rules for India, the deal would need approval by the U.S. Congress.

Suppliers group approval would enable other countries to strike similar deals with India.

Washington, eager to see the deal pushed through before President George W. Bush leaves office, played down the inconclusive end to the two-day gathering.

"We had a constructive and positive discussion today," acting U.S. Undersecretary of State John Rood told reporters.

"For us in the United States, we're pleased with the results of the discussion and I remain very optimistic that we're going to continue to make progress toward this important goal."

Observers had predicted it could take multiple meetings before a decision is taken.

Delegates leaving the closed-door meeting Friday gave little indication of what went on but it was clear that United States and Indian hopes for an unconditional exemption had suffered a significant setback.

Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon declined to comment to international journalists.

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One participant told The Associated Press that the United States was expected to present a revised waiver proposal by the beginning of next week.

"We had expected them to have a new draft ready today but apparently there were so many amendments and problems that they didn't get it done in time," said the participant, who requested anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

The next meeting is expected to take place in Vienna on September 4 and 5, participants said.

All participants spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not allowed to speak to the media.

Some countries are eager to do more business with India, and appear to back a U.S. argument that the deal would bring India into the nonproliferation mainstream.

But other countries are concerned that exporting nuclear fuel and technology to a country that has not made a legally binding disarmament pledge could set a dangerous precedent.

Daryl Kimball of the Washington-based Arms Control Association said, the group was relieved that "a number of NSG states are insisting on common sense restrictions and conditions on nuclear trade with India to reduce the risk that such trade will assist India's nuclear bomb program and hold India accountable to its political commitment not to resume testing."

As discussions continue, it is vital that states make clear that nuclear trade with India would be terminated if it resumes testing nuclear weapons for any reason, Kimball said.

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Japan, Australia to Co-Chair Nonproliferation Commission in October

Tokyo Kyodo World Service, 25 August 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Japan and Australia will jointly hold the first meeting of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament in October to discuss the controversial U.S.-India civil nuclear accord and global efforts to reinvigorate the nonproliferation regime, the co-chairs said Monday [August 25].

Former Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi and former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans told a news conference after meeting Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda that the commission will comprise 15 to 16 members from around the world and draw up a report ahead of the 2010 review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

"One of the main topics will be to discuss practical steps toward realizing a vision for a world without nuclear weapons," said Kawaguchi, currently a House of Councilors parliamentarian. "There are also the issues of what to do with countries that are developing nuclear programs while violating the NPT or are not members of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)."

Similarly, Evans pointed out other challenges such as the likely increase of proliferation risks as a result of the expected growth in civil nuclear energy demand to tackle climate change, and the possibility of nuclear weapons and material falling into the hands of terrorists and other non-state actors.

"We see it (the commission) both as a way of cementing the very strong and longstanding bilateral relationship between Australia and Japan, but also of course, of making a major contribution together on a central, global issue," Evans said.

Noting that the U.S.-India nuclear deal is "very controversial," Evans said it contains good and bad elements.

"The good news is that it shows one way forward of introducing some discipline on a country that has not previously been subjected to any formal disciplines other than self-discipline on these issues," he said.

"The less good news is that the discipline is not quite as strong as we would like when it comes to testing, when it comes to fissile material production and other key issues," Evans added.

"We're all going to have to work harder if we really do want a global regime that is very strong, that picks up all the best of the NPT and makes it even stronger and applicable universally."



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Kawaguchi and Evans gave no details on who the commission members will be or where the October meeting will be held.

Separately on Monday, Japan and Australia also held senior working-level bilateral talks on disarmament and nonproliferation.

The two sides agreed that North Korea's nuclear ambitions pose a threat to global stability and that international cooperation is needed to achieve a diplomatic and peaceful resolution to the Iranian nuclear standoff, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said.

Japan, as the world's only nation to have suffered U.S. atomic bombings in 1945, has played an active role in pushing for nonproliferation since the end of World War II.

But recently, Japan appears to have softened its position amid calls by its ally, the United States, to support the accord with India, which is not a member of the NPT. Japan is likely to comply by not opposing the deal.

Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka said Monday that while India's nuclear testing despite not being a signatory of the NPT remains a significant concern, its "strategic importance" especially in environmental and climate change issues—such as the peaceful use of atomic energy to reduce emissions—is something "Japan too can understand."

"Japan has a strong belief in nonproliferation and the NPT regime, so we will discuss internationally to find a good balance," he said, in remarks hinting of Japan's readiness to allow for an exception to be made for India under the Nuclear Suppliers Group ban on trade in nuclear materials with non-members of the NPT.

Fukuda and Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd agreed to set up the commission when they met in June during the latter's visit to Japan.

The idea was proposed by Rudd, who wanted the commission to follow up on the work of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and the Tokyo Forum for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, which were set up ahead of the 2000 NPT review.

Evans was Australia's foreign minister in 1995 when the government of then Prime Minister Paul Keating set up the Canberra Commission.



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Biological Weapons Convention Expert Meeting Concludes

States News Service, 22 August 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The following information was released by the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG):

The 2008 Meeting of Experts from States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was held in Geneva from 18 to 22 August 2008 to discuss and promote common understanding and effective action on:

1. National, regional and international measures to improve biosafety and biosecurity, including laboratory safety and security of pathogens and toxins; and
2. Oversight, education, awareness raising, and adoption and/or development of codes of conduct with the aim of preventing misuse in the context of advances in bio-science and bio-technology research with the potential of use for purposes prohibited by the Convention.

The Meeting brought together almost 500 participants, including diplomats, officials and over 180 scientists and experts from government agencies, international organizations, international and regional academies of science, professional associations, academic institutions, and commercial corporations.

Participants discussed concepts of biosecurity and biosafety in-depth, as well as means to improve their implementation both at national and international levels. Australia was one of several delegations to highlight the important differences between biosecurity and biosafety, noting that "biosecurity comprises measures that minimize the possibility of biological agents being deliberately used to cause harm. This distinguishes it from biosafety, which involves measures aimed at protecting people and the environment from the unintentional impact of biological agents, and includes workplace health and safety issues and the prevention of the accidental release of such agents. In essence, biosafety protects people from dangerous germs, while biosecurity protects germs from dangerous people."

Many participants agreed that education and awareness-raising were essential, especially among scientists who deal with biological materials that could potentially be turned into weapons. Some delegations called for the establishment of codes of conduct as a way to enhance the responsibility of practitioners and the global security of biological research and related activities. Iran summed up the views of many by stating that "raising [the] scientific community's awareness in either state or private sectors with respect to the objectives enshrined in the BWC could be an important and effective element in promoting the national implementation of the Convention."



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Other proposals included: establishment of international standards; strengthening of laboratory protective measures; prevention of unauthorized access to facilities with high risks; external certification and audit to improve biosafety and biosecurity standards; reinforcement of management of pathogenic organisms and of risk-assessment methods; involvement of all stakeholders; increase of regional and international cooperation to improve biosafety and biosecurity methods; improvement of transportation methods; training for scientists and life sciences students to raise awareness of the Convention; and supporting workshops and seminars both for officials and scientists.

The Meeting of Experts was chaired by Ambassador Georgi Avramchev of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Referring to the extensive discussions held during the week, the Chairman said that "given the rapid increase in both size and geographic distribution of modern biotechnology, bringing biologists on board efforts to prevent misuse is a significant challenge. This meeting has seen us take a large step forwards. The number and diversity of participants has confirmed, once again, that the BWC is the ideal forum for the coordination of efforts to ensure the life sciences are used only for the benefit of humanity".

In addition to government experts from States Parties to the BWC, participants included experts from international organizations such as the WHO, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the OECD; scientific organizations such as the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues and the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry; professional associations such as the American Biological Safety Association, the Asia-Pacific Biosafety Association, and the European Biosafety Association; and private sector corporations such as the J. Craig Venter Institute, GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca PLC.

In order to give this wide range of experts more opportunities to meet their counterparts and maximize networking, the 2008 Meeting of Experts featured poster sessions for the first time, held on Tuesday 19 August (topic 1) and Thursday 21 August (topic 2). The poster sessions enhanced the technical information available to delegations by allowing experts to present a poster on the details of their work. Both sessions were enthusiastically received by participants, and it is likely that such sessions will become a regular feature of BWC meetings.

The results of the Meeting of Experts will be considered by the Meeting of States Parties, to be held in Geneva from 1-5 December 2008. The Meeting of States Parties will review the ideas and proposals presented at the Meeting of Experts, and produce a report aimed at promoting effective action to strengthen the operation of the Convention in the areas covered by the two topics.

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The Meeting of Experts is part of a four-year program mandated by the 2006 Sixth Review Conference of the BWC aimed at strengthening the implementation of the Convention and improving its effectiveness as a practical barrier against the development or use of biological weapons. The BWC prohibits the development, production and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons.

More formally referred to as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, the treaty opened for signature in 1972 and entered into force in 1975. It currently has 162 States Parties, with a further 13 States having signed but not yet ratified.

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End Looms for Action against Shipment of Chemical Weapons Waste

Defense Environment Alert, 19 August 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Activists may soon effectively be forced to end landmark litigation that challenged the legality of the Army's shipments of neutralized chemical weapons waste from Indiana across state lines for final disposal in Texas—potentially influencing the outcome of waste disposal efforts at two other Army sites where neutralized chemical weapons will require secondary disposal treatment as well...

Shipments of caustic wastewater, or hydrolysate, from a Newport, IN, chemical weapons disposal plant to a commercial incinerator in Port Arthur, TX, are vigorously opposed by a coalition of activists, which claims that the shipments are potentially illegal and also pose environmental justice issues for poor communities living near the Texas incinerator. The case, *Sierra Club, et al. v. Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense, et al.*, is currently taking slow procedural steps toward a full trial in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana.

A leading activist with the anti-incineration Chemical Weapons Working Group (CWWG) says that although the legal challenge will continue for the time-being, it is fast running out of time following the Army's announcement August 11 that all VX nerve agent at Newport has now been neutralized.

Asked if the legal action is now over, the activist says: "As a technical matter, no. As a practical matter, probably." He adds that "this case is still tracking toward a full trial, but the issue will be moot by the time we get there." The final shipment of hydrolysate is expected within the next two months, according to the Army's Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) and the activist.

While the Newport case does not set a precedent, what has happened so far in the case could still serve as an example for other sites in Kentucky and Colorado that still have chemical weapons which might be shipped off-site for final destruction once neutralized, according to the activist. Those sites, however, have different stocks of chemical agent—the Pueblo, CO facility has only mustard agent, while the Lexington, KY site has GB and VX nerve agents in addition to mustard. The Army's Aberdeen, MD, facility was the first one to send its neutralized chemical agent off-site for disposal, the activist source points out.

The source says that despite the dispute over waste disposal, he and other activists are pleased that CMA has successfully destroyed the Newport VX stock. CWWG sent a congratulatory message to CMA to that effect. "We are really glad they got done with the neutralization process," the source says.

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In a statement issued August 11, CMA Director Conrad Whyne says: "the lessons learned and shared at Newport will help the six remaining U.S. storage sites, as well as others around the world, safely and successfully destroy their stockpiles."

The plaintiffs in the Newport case allege that the Army violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by failing to fully evaluate all possible alternatives for disposing of hydrolysate on site. They also call into question the legality under international treaty law of shipping hydrolysate off site, claiming that under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which governs chemical weapons disposal, VX agent is not considered fully destroyed until the hydrolysate is destroyed. The CWC bans transportation of chemical agent. Further, they claim that the shipment of the waste across state lines contravenes federal defense law.

Efforts by the plaintiffs to obtain an injunction preventing the shipments have failed, leaving the activists with a full trial on the merits of the case as their only alternative. This cannot now take place before the last of the VX is expected to leave Newport for Port Arthur, the CWWG source says.

The opposition to off-site shipments has arisen at other sites as well. Colorado lawmakers are attempting to block any off-site shipment of neutralized agent, known as hydrolysate, from the Pueblo site. In language inserted by Democratic Congress members into the fiscal year 2009 defense authorization bill, the House seeks to prevent any transport of hydrolysate from Pueblo in FY09, and directs the defense secretary to submit to Congress a "comprehensive cost-benefit analysis between on-site and off-site methods for disposing of such hydrolysate." The House bill must now be reconciled with the Senate version, which has yet to be passed by the full Senate.

The Senate Armed Services Committee's version does not contain the same prohibition, although Sen. Ken Salazar (D-CO) introduced a bill in February, S. 2656, which seeks to impose a ban. The bill has stalled since its introduction.

In a separate challenge related to chemical weapons disposal, Oregon state regulators are on the verge of issuing a key determination regarding the efficacy of carbon filtration as a method to capture mercury in mustard agent slated to be incinerated at Umatilla, OR. They are required under state law to establish whether sulfur-impregnated carbon filters, the Army's favored method, represent the best available technology (BAT) for preventing releases of mercury from smokestacks attached to incinerators destroying mustard agent that contains elevated levels of the toxic metal.

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Activists are closely awaiting Oregon's decision, as they contemplate their next move in a lawsuit over the Army and state safeguards for addressing the mercury contamination.

Under a 2007 state court ruling, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) must reevaluate whether the incinerator technology proposed for mustard agent destruction at the Army's Umatilla facility meets the BAT test under a state environmental law. The ruling in *GASP v. Environmental Quality Commission* was a win for the environmental group G.A.S.P., which has challenged the Army's incineration practices at Umatilla. The group has pushed for neutralization to be used at the site instead.

In comments submitted to a public hearing hosted by DEQ July 24, the group says "G.A.S.P. strongly disagrees with the DEQ's suggestion that baseline incineration and the proposed modified carbon filtration system would be the best available technology . . . for the destruction of either mercury-contaminated mustard ton containers or any of the mustard ton containers."

G.A.S.P. argues that DEQ has not counted the number of ton containers of mustard agent at the site that contain high levels of mercury, nor tested them to see which ones contain solid "heels" of agent in them. "Processing containers of uncharacterized or improperly characterized wastes would violate federal and state law," the group says.

The group also pushes for DEQ to evaluate an alternative chemical weapons destruction system. The system, known as Davinch, has been successfully used to destroy chemical agent using a "cold plasma" method in Belgium, G.A.S.P. states, and questions why DEQ has not seriously examined using the system.

DEQ officials should decide by the end of August whether the BAT requirement at Umatilla has been met, an attorney for G.A.S.P. says. The attorney says if the plaintiffs in the case are unsatisfied with the DEQ's decision, they may opt to challenge its adequacy under the existing lawsuit.

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Sri Lanka to Host Asian Chemical Weapons Convention

Colombo Divaina, 20 August 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

The regional meeting of the National Authorities and Parliamentarians in Asia on the National Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention will be held on 25 and 26 August at the Hilton Hotel in Colombo.

Delegates from 30 countries will attend the convention. V.D. Jayatileke, additional secretary to the industrial development ministry, said that Sri Lanka had been selected to host the regional summit because the country had played an important role in preventing the manufacture of chemical weapons and their illegal use.

Chemicals are used in various industrial activities in many countries, but in accordance with a proposal, which was ratified by the United Nations in 1992, several countries in 1993 entered into the Chemical Weapons Convention to prevent chemical weapons being manufactured. The Sri Lankan summit will focus on the action taken by various countries in this regard, its progress, obstacles, and delays encountered in implementation.

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Richmond Register, 22 August 2008, <http://www.cwwg.org/>

The 2017 deadline for destruction of chemical weapons stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot seems very feasible after news released Thursday [August 21] at a press conference in Richmond City Hall.

Elected officials from Washington, D.C., on down to the local city and county levels gathered to hear reports from U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell, R-KY, and U.S. Representative Ben Chandler, D-Sixth District (KY), who toured the construction sites at the depot and viewed the work being done that eventually will serve as the buildings where the chemical weapon demilitarization efforts will take place.

“We collaborated last year on a deadline of 2017 and you’ll hear people complain about whether it can or cannot be met,” McConnell said. “Our view is that it can be met and we’re going to do everything we can to get the job done by 2017.”

The city commission chambers were lined with oversized photographs of construction progress being made at the depot, including pictures of the future munitions disposal building, maintenance building, the electrical substation and the personnel building.

“It is quite an impressive thing to see all this infrastructure coming up out of the ground out there and finally having something tangible, something you can get your hands around as opposed to just another several years of discussions and dialogues,” said Craig Williams, director of the Berea-based CWWG (Chemical Weapons Working Group). “There’s actually things rising up out of the ground.”

However, no matter how fast things progress at the depot, there is still a large portion of the community who are not satisfied with the pace of destruction.

“I know there is a great deal of frustration in the area over not having progress made fast enough, and I think our senator and congressman will both attest that there is significant progress being made,” Williams said. “Everyone is doing everything they can.”

McConnell said it was a “misfortune” that Richmond is the home of a portion of America’s weapons of mass destruction.

“Probably the first significant problem I learned about after coming to the Senate was (the weapons stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot in Richmond),” said McConnell, who has been in

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the Senate for 24 years. “It’s been a priority from the beginning. You can’t just snap your fingers and make it disappear. It has to be done safely. If you had to decide between speed and safety, it would have to be safety. What we’re trying to do is try to get it down as quickly as possible, as safely as possible.”

The 2017 deadline also seems like a realistic goal to Chandler, as well.

“I believe it’s achievable,” he said. “We (he and McConnell) are both going to work very, very hard to see that it is achievable. That’s doesn’t mean it will happen, but I can assure you that we’re all going to work together. When I was elected to be congressman of the Sixth District of Kentucky, I was elected to serve the people and what was in their best interest for their welfare. This is an obligation that transcends any kind of politics and it’s been a pleasure to work with Senator McConnell successfully on this issue, and I thank him.”

The Pentagon previously suggested the weapons at the depot be destroyed by 2023, but that was just the Pentagon’s way of not having to spend a lot of money at the time to go toward the project, Williams said. “You need to keep in mind that the 2023 date was just based on how much money (the Pentagon) was willing to give to the project [...] The military doesn’t like to spend money on getting rid of weapons, they like to spend money on getting more weapons, so this is not a high priority to them and these two gentleman (McConnell and Chandler) have made it a priority to the Pentagon.”

“We literally ordered the Army to look at other alternatives, and their studies revealed that there was indeed another way to do it,” McConnell said. “We got them to go on an alternative approach that’s entirely feasible and here we are today. No matter who wins the presidential election, Congressman Chandler and I have been working to make sure the job gets done.”

The lawmakers declined to comment on two recent leaks of mustard gas at the depot, but Williams said they were minor and did not concern him. While he acknowledged risks would persist as long as the deadly chemicals are stored in Richmond, he said it is not feasible to expect the destruction project be moved earlier than 2017.

Even though beating the 2017 may not be realistic, Chandler said there is still reason to be proud of the accomplishments thus far.

“The issue has moved from whether or not this is going to be done to when it’s going to be done, and that is enormous progress in and of itself,” he said.

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Iraq Signs the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty

CTBTO, 20 August 2008, <http://www.ctbto.org/>

"We welcome the decision by Iraq to sign the CTBT," Tibor Tóth, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) said in a statement. "This is particularly significant given the multitude of challenges facing the Government of Iraq today: it is a strong political signal for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. My hope is that it will encourage other countries of the region and beyond to follow suit."

The CTBT bans all nuclear explosions. A verification regime is being built to monitor compliance with the Treaty. A total of 337 facilities worldwide constituting the International Monitoring System (IMS) are foreseen to monitor the underground, the oceans and the atmosphere for any sign of a nuclear explosion. Of these, 230 facilities are already transmitting data to Vienna. Despite many stations not having been established, the IMS performed better than foreseen by the Treaty negotiators when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) announced a nuclear test on 9 October 2006.

Tóth highlighted the benefits that Iraq will enjoy having joined the family of CTBTO Member States. In addition to participating in the organization's decision-making bodies, Iraq will gain access to the raw and analyzed IMS data, which can also be used for civil and scientific applications, such as for disaster mitigation. Furthermore, Iraqi citizens will now be able to work at the CTBTO.

As Iraq was one of the few remaining larger countries worldwide not to have signed the CTBT, its signature is an important milestone for the Treaty. The total number of signatures in the critical Treaty-defined region of the Middle East and South Asia has now increased from 20 to 21, leaving only 5 non-signatories: Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Syria. Among the Arab League, the total number of signatures now stands at 18 out of a total of 22 States.

Adherence to the CTBT is now almost universal. With Iraq's signature, a total of 179 States have signed the CTBT. To enter into force, however, the Treaty must be signed and ratified by the 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the CTBT. These States participated in the Treaty's negotiations in 1996 and possessed nuclear power or research reactors at the time. Thirty-five of these States have ratified, including the three nuclear weapon States: France, Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom. The nine remaining States are: China, DPRK, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and the United States.

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Iran, IAEA to Continue Talks

GSN, 21 August 2008, <http://www.nti.org/>

Iran today [August 21] said it would continue discussing its nuclear program with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) following the nation's second round of talks this month with the UN nuclear watchdog, Agence France-Presse reported.

IAEA safeguards chief Olli Heinonen began another round of talks Monday in Tehran with Iranian officials. He planned to depart yesterday, Iranian state media reported.

"The negotiations held over the past three days were positive and will continue," said Iranian Atomic Energy Organization deputy chief Mohammad Saeedi. "The two sides have agreed to continue these discussions."

Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's envoy to the UN nuclear watchdog, added that "negotiations ... on technical cooperation between Iran and the IAEA will continue."

Neither side has disclosed details on the focus of the recent discussions, but Heinonen has visited Tehran in recent months in an attempt to clarify Iran's nuclear intentions. Iran insists the program is strictly aimed at producing civilian energy...

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Russian Military Experts to Conduct Observation Flight over UK

Russia & CIS Military Newswire, 18 August 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Russian military will conduct an observation flight over the UK in a Swedish plane, a source in the Russian defense Ministry told Interfax on Monday [August 18].

The flight will be conducted under the international Open Skies Treaty.

"The flight route will be determined and agreed upon with the observed party on the basis of the weather conditions, including the capabilities of the observation equipment, restrictions of its use envisaged by the treaty, and the flight safety requirements," the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement.

The use of the observation and the preciseness of the route during the flight will be monitored by Russian and British experts, the ministry said.

The observation flight will take place in the period between August 18 and 22.

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U.S., Polish Military Inspectors Arrive at Baltic Fleet

Interfax-AVN, 21 August 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

A group of military inspectors from the U.S. and Poland have arrived at the Baltic Fleet under the Treaty on Open Skies, the Baltic Fleet press service reported on Thursday [August 21].

"The foreign military inspectors will conduct a test flight over the territory of the Kaliningrad region in an An-30 plane, which is owned by the Ukrainian Air Force. The flight will take place over the Baltic Fleet's military property," the press service said in a release.

The inspectors have conducted flights over the Baltic Fleet facilities many times. Four groups of military experts from the U.S., Canada, Poland, Lithuania, and Italy have worked in the Baltic Fleet this year.

The international Treaty on Open Skies is one of the main elements of the system to control the military activities of the countries that signed it.

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