DEFENSE TREATY INSPECTION READINESS PROGRAM • READINESS THROUGH AWARENESS

BI-WEEKLY TREATY REVIEW

17 June – 30 June 2008

DTRA

ARMS CONTROL (GENERAL)

New Data Found on North Korea's Nuclear Capacity

Washington Post, 21 June 2008, http://www.washingtonpost.com/

The United States in recent weeks has obtained new intelligence—fresh traces of highly enriched uranium discovered among 18,000 pages of North Korean documents—that are raising new questions about whether Pyongyang pursued an alternative route to producing a nuclear weapon, according to sources familiar with the intelligence findings. *(654 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

North Korea Destroys Tower at Nuclear Site

New York Times, 28 June 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/

In a gesture demonstrating its commitment to halt its nuclear weapons program, North Korea blew up the most prominent symbol of its plutonium production Friday [June 27]. *(688 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

Rice Urges North Korea to Give Up All Nuclear Weapons Despite 'Attachment'

AFP, 28 June 2008, http://news.google.com/

The United States pressed North Korea Saturday [June 28] to follow up on a breakthrough by abandoning its full atomic weapons program – one where Washington sees signs of "emotional attachment" from Pyongyang. *(623 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)

Russia Opens Fourth Chemical Weapons Destruction Plant

AP, 17 June 2008, http://www.iht.com/

Russia opened a fourth plant Tuesday [June 17] to destroy its chemical weapons stockpiles, which are the largest in the world. *(303 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

OPCW to Prevent Chemical Weapons from Falling to Terrorists

Itar-Tass, 18 June 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will not cease to exist after the whole reported stock of chemical weapons in the world will have been destroyed by 2012, OPCW Director General Rogelio Pfirter told a press conference at the Itar-Tass headquarters here on Wednesday [June 18]. *(177 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

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News articles and publications found on the DTIRP website are compilations of open source current news articles and commentary concerning significant arms control treaty and related national security issues. The publications aim to give a balanced representation of how the public, other government organizations, and the media may view these arms control and threat reduction programs and issues. They are intended to serve the informational needs of Department of Defense (DoD) officials in the continuing assessment of defense policies, programs and actions. Further reproduction or redistribution for private use or gain is subject to original copyright restrictions. The views and opinions expressed in these articles are not necessarily those supported by DoD, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, or the DTIRP.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)(CONT.)

Pentagon Ordered to Speed Chemical Weapon Disposal in Colorado

GSN, 20 June 2008, http://www.nti.org/

The Colorado Health Department has issued a mandatory directive Wednesday requiring the U.S. Defense Department to move quickly on disposal of chemical weapons stored in the state, the Associated Press reported. *(370 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

VX Landmine Disposal Operations Completed at Pine Bluff Arsenal

CMA, 23 June 2008, http://www.cma.army.mil/

The Pine Bluff Chemical Activity (PBCA) and the Pine Bluff Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (PBCDF) successfully transported and destroyed the last VX nerve-agent filled landmine. *(374 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

Colorado Orders DoD to Meet 2017 Chemical Demilitarization Deadline

Defense Environment Alert, 24 June 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Colorado waste regulators have ordered the Defense Department to meet a 2017 federal deadline for destroying massive amounts of chemical munitions waste and stockpiled chemicals—four years ahead of a 2021 DoD deadline—shortly before the military is scheduled to submit a study to Congress on its options and budgeting for meeting the accelerated deadline. *(865 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

Guinea-Bissau Designates OPCW National Authority

The Hague, 25 June 2008, http://www.opcw.org/

On June 19, 2008, Guinea-Bissau became the 184th State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). In compliance with its obligations as a new State Party to the CWC, Guinea-Bissau has informed the OPCW that it has designated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as its National Authority. *(262 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

Army Plans Overhaul of Buried Chemical Weapons Disposal

Superfund Report, 30 June 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Army is preparing a shakeup of the mechanisms used to respond to chemical weapons materials newly discovered at sites around the country that do not form part of documented stockpiles, under a new plan yet to be approved by the Defense Department (DoD) hierarchy. *(856 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

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CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Japanese Government Seeks Cluster Bomb Alternative

The Daily Yomiuri, 22 June 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Japanese Defense Ministry has decided to start procuring new weapons, including new types of cluster bombs, from next fiscal year to replace its stockpile of cluster bombs, whose production and use will be banned after a treaty outlawing such munitions takes effect, sources said Saturday [June 21]. *(265 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST-BAN TREATY (CTBT)

Nuclear Test-Ban Data to Help in Tsunami Warning

AFP, 25 June 2008, ***http://news.yahoo.com/***

The body that oversees the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) offered its unique know-how Wednesday [June 25] to countries that ring the Pacific Ocean to warn them of killer tsunamis. *(262 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

INTEGRATED SAFEGUARDS

Talks Delayed, Indian Nuclear Deal Still Deadlocked

GSN, 18 June 2008, ***http://www.nti.org/***

Indian politicians have postponed a meeting to discuss the deadlock over implementing a nuclear trade agreement with the United States, Reuters reported June 18. *(349 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

Ahmadinejad Says West Failed in Iran Nuclear Crisis

AFP, 19 June 2008, ***http://www.spacewar.com/***

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Thursday [June 19] the West has failed to break Iran's will in the nuclear standoff, days after world powers presented Tehran with a new offer aimed at ending the crisis. *(251 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

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INTEGRATED SAFEGUARDS (CONT.)

Syria Denies Bombed Site Was Nuclear Reactor

Associated Press, 30 June 2008, http://www.iht.com/

Syria's foreign minister on Monday [June 30] repeated his country's denials that a site bombed by Israel last year was a nascent nuclear reactor but said he wished his country had such a program to counter Israel's nuclear might. *(481 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

India Accepts It Cannot Buy Uranium from Australia

AP, 23 June 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

India accepts the fact that it cannot buy uranium from Australia without signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), the Indian foreign minister said Monday [June 23] during a visit to Australia. *(447 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

NPT in Urgent Need of Overhaul

AFP, 29 June 2008, http://news.google.com/

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which celebrates its 40th birthday this week, may have succeeded in keeping the number countries in possession of nuclear weapons down to a mere handful. *(732 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

FULL TEXT OF BI-WEEKLY ARTICLES FOLLOWS:

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New Data Found on North Korea's Nuclear Capacity

Washington Post, 21 June 2008, http://www.washingtonpost.com/

The United States in recent weeks has obtained new intelligence—fresh traces of highly enriched uranium discovered among 18,000 pages of North Korean documents—that are raising new questions about whether Pyongyang pursued an alternative route to producing a nuclear weapon, according to sources familiar with the intelligence findings.

Officials at the State Department and with the director of national intelligence declined to comment on the new information, but sources said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made an oblique reference to it in a speech on North Korea policy to the Heritage Foundation on Wednesday.

"As we've gotten deeper into the process, we've been troubled by additional information about North Korea's uranium-enrichment capability," Rice said. "And this information has reaffirmed skepticism about dealing with North Korea."

The new intelligence arrived at an awkward moment for the Bush administration. North Korea next week plans to submit its long-awaited declaration on its nuclear programs, which is expected to disclose that its nuclear reactor at Yongbyon produced about 37 kilograms of plutonium. Then, on June 27 or 28, North Korean officials are expected to blow up the cooling tower attached to the facility, diplomats said.

Plutonium offers a different route to producing a nuclear weapon than uranium enrichment. The Bush administration in 2002 accused North Korea of having a clandestine uranium-enrichment program, based partly on North Korea's large-scale purchases of aluminum tubes. Analysts speculated the tubes could be used as the outer casing for centrifuges needed to spin hot uranium gas into the fuel for nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang has insisted that it had no uranium-enrichment program, even taking an American diplomat in 2007 to a missile factory using the tubes and allowing him to bring home samples in his suitcase.

But late last year, U.S. analysts unexpectedly discovered traces of enriched uranium on the smelted aluminum tubing. Despite months of analysis, intelligence officials have been unable to determine whether the tubes acquired traces of uranium as part of an active enrichment program or were contaminated by exposure to other equipment.

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Pakistan, for instance, has acknowledged providing North Korea with a sample centrifuge kit, and so the tubes might have acquired the enriched uranium from the Pakistani equipment. In 2003, inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency detected traces of enriched uranium at an Iranian nuclear facility and determined that the material came from Pakistani equipment provided by a nuclear smuggling network.

Now, the fresh samples of enriched uranium complicate the issue. Sources said that traces of highly enriched uranium were found on the 18,000 pages of Yongbyon reactor records provided by North Korea to the United States last month. North Korea provided the documents, which date back to 1987, to help the Bush administration verify the amount of plutonium it produced in the reactor. But the documents have become central to the debate over Pyongyang's possible enrichment activities.

The uranium enrichment data are preliminary, though at least one source familiar with the intelligence said experts had concluded it did not come from Pakistan. Other sources, however, said there was still a dispute on that question. Analysts also do not know how the documents might have been handled and how they could have come into contact with a possible enrichment program.

Last year, U.S. officials played down the 2002 intelligence that North Korea had a uranium-enrichment program, suggesting that North Korea might have tried to start such a program but did not get far. But the public comments have shifted in recent months.

"They have been either seeking or have gotten or have done something on the highly enriched uranium side," Rice said Thursday in an interview with the Wall Street Journal editorial board that was released by the State Department yesterday. "The problem is we don't actually know what they've done. I will tell you that the more we dig into it and the more we actually talk to them about it, the more concerning it is."

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North Korea Destroys Tower at Nuclear Site

New York Times, 28 June 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/

In a gesture demonstrating its commitment to halt its nuclear weapons program, North Korea blew up the most prominent symbol of its plutonium production Friday [June 27].

The 60-foot cooling tower at the North's main nuclear power plant collapsed in a heap of shattered concrete and twisted steel, filmed by international and regional television broadcasters invited to witness the event.

The tower is a technically insignificant structure, relatively easy to rebuild. North Korea also has been disabling—but not destroying—more sensitive parts of the nuclear complex, such as the 5-megawatt reactor, a plant that makes its fuel and a laboratory that extracts plutonium from its spent fuel.

Nonetheless, the destruction of the tower, the most visible element of the nuclear complex at Yongbyon, 60 miles north of Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, affirmed the incremental progress that has been made in American-led multilateral efforts to end North Korea's nuclear weapons programs.

"As you all saw, the cooling tower is no longer there," Sung Kim, a senior State Department official who witnessed the blast from a hill, told South Korean television. "It's a very significant disablement step."

But some experts in South Korea said the demolition, although dramatic, did not answer key questions, such as how many weapons North Korea has built or whether it has exported its nuclear technology to countries like Syria.

"It's symbolic. But in real terms, whether demolishing or not a cooling tower that has already been disabled doesn't make much difference," said Lee Ji-sue, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Myongji University.

The demolition also shows that North Korea has concluded that the Yongbyon complex, in service for several decades, has served its purpose after producing an unknown number of nuclear weapons, Mr. Lee said.

United States officials have accused North Korea of hiding an uranium-enrichment program, a charge that the North's declaration on Thursday failed to address.

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On Thursday, North Korea submitted its first significant—although partial—account of its arms programs. Almost simultaneously, President Bush announced that Washington was removing North Korea from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism, and issued a proclamation lifting some sanctions under the Trading with the Enemy Act.

“We appraise this as a positive step,” a spokesman for the North Korean Foreign Ministry told the North’s state-run news agency on Friday night. But if Washington wants to see further progress in ending the North’s nuclear programs, he said, it must “completely and comprehensively abolish its hostile policy.”

The spokesman added that South Korea should also be inspected and monitored to guarantee the “denuclearization of the whole Korean Peninsula.” North Korea regularly accuses the United States of deploying nuclear weapons in the South.

The Yongbyon complex, built around a Soviet-era nuclear reactor, is the North’s only known source of plutonium. North Korea had started disabling the reactor and other parts of the complex last year under an agreement with the United States, South Korea, Japan, Russia and China. Under the deal, North Korea has been receiving fuel aid from the five nations. But it was not obliged to destroy any of its nuclear facilities until further talks determine what rewards it will get in return.

South Korean and American officials welcomed the early demolition of the cooling tower as an encouraging sign of North Korea’s commitment to a broader deal under which Washington hopes to eradicate all the North’s nuclear assets.

“By demolishing the tower, North Korea appears to demonstrate that it would not produce any more plutonium,” said Kim Yeon-chul, a North Korea expert at the Asiatic Research Center at Korea University in Seoul.

The cooling tower carries waste heat from the reactor. While the Communist government kept its nuclear activities shrouded in secrecy, steam curling from the tower into the atmosphere was captured in spy satellite photographs, providing outside observers with the most visible sign of operations at Yongbyon.

The photographs reminded the rest of the world of the operation’s dangers. North Korea shocked the world in October 2006 by detonating a nuclear bomb in an underground test. It is also suspected by U.S. officials of providing nuclear technology to countries like Syria.

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Rice Urges North Korea to Give Up All Nuclear Weapons Despite 'Attachment'

AFP, 28 June 2008, http://news.google.com/

The United States pressed North Korea Saturday [June 28] to follow up on a breakthrough by abandoning its full atomic weapons program – one where Washington sees signs of "emotional attachment" from Pyongyang.

"At the end of this (process), we have to have the abandonment of all programs, weapons and materials," U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said after talks in Seoul with her South Korean counterpart Yu Myung-Hwan.

Rice was visiting South Korea before traveling on to China on Sunday as part of six-nation talks now focused on verifying a North Korean nuclear inventory submitted Thursday and on dismantling the full program.

A day after delivering the long-awaited nuclear inventory or declaration, the North on Friday blew up the cooling tower at its Yongbyon reactor in a televised event to affirm its commitment to denuclearization. U.S. envoy Sung Kim said that, while attending the event, he saw signs of an "emotional attachment" to the Yongbyon plant among engineers working there, including plant director Ri Yong-ho.

When asked if the North Koreans were so wedded to the program that they might not give all of it up, Kim replied that the disarmament process was set up in phases to "test their commitment" each step of the way.

Rice said she and Yu, who spoke at the same press conference, had extensive talks about efforts to verify the declaration, which covers nuclear facilities and the production of bomb-making plutonium, but not weapons.

Critics point out that it also does not address concerns about a suspected secret highly enriched uranium (HEU) weapons program. Nor does it answer suspicions of nuclear proliferation to Syria. The North, in a separate document, has merely acknowledged the U.S. concerns about both issues and promised to try to resolve differences.

"In the next phase we do have to move on abandonment. That is the purpose of six-party talks," Rice said.

"There are documents that are referred to in the declaration concerning those two issues, HEU and proliferation," she told the press conference. "Thus far... we don't have the answers we

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need about either, but I expect that the North will live up to the obligation that it has undertaken to take those concerns seriously and to address them."

Thursday's declaration is part of a six-party agreement in which Washington is playing a leading role. The North is disabling Yongbyon under U.S. supervision in return for energy aid and the lifting of some sanctions.

The next and final phase of the pact calls for the North to dismantle plants and hand over all nuclear material and weaponry in exchange for diplomatic ties with the United States and Japan, and a formal peace pact.

Washington has eased some trade sanctions and moved towards taking the North off its list of state sponsors of terrorism in return for the declaration. It helped fund the demolition of the cooling tower with a 2.5-million-dollar contribution.

"There is still much to be done but it's a good step when the North Koreans comply with their obligations," said National Security Council spokesman Gordon Johndroe.

The tower at Yongbyon, 96 kilometers (60 miles) north of Pyongyang, was the most visible symbol of the North's decades-old pursuit of nuclear weapons.

The facility produced the plutonium for a program which culminated in a nuclear test in October 2006.

Its razing was of symbolic value only since Yongbyon is already largely disabled under the pact grouping China, Japan, North and South Korea, Russia and the United States.

The six parties are expected to meet in Beijing early next month. They will discuss ways to verify the document, complete the disablement and prepare for the final phase.

Rice was to meet with President Lee Myung-Bak later Saturday before flying to China early Sunday.

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Russia Opens Fourth Chemical Weapons Destruction Plant

AP, 17 June 2008, http://www.iht.com/

Russia opened a fourth plant Tuesday [June 17] to destroy its chemical weapons stockpiles, which are the largest in the world. The destruction facility, near the site of one of Russia's seven major chemical weapons arsenals, will help accelerate an ambitious effort to eliminate the stockpiles in less than four years.

The facility near Leonidovka in the Penza Oblast will serve to destroy 7,600 tons (6,885 metric tons) of VX, sarin, and soman nerve agents, about 17 percent of Russia's declared chemical weapons stockpile, according to Global Green USA, the Washington-based affiliate of former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's Green Cross International environmental organization. The plant is about 350 miles (550 kilometers) southeast of Moscow.

Global Green USA congratulated Russia on neutralizing about 25 percent of its declared 40,000 metric tons chemical weapons stockpiles. The start-up of the fourth facility will help speed up destruction "and potentially meet the April 2012 deadline of the Chemical Weapons Convention" for elimination of the stockpile, Global Green USA program director Paul Walker said in a statement.

"However, deadlines must not trump safety and protection of public health, and we urge Russia to be extremely cautious and transparent as they move forward with this dangerous process," Walker said.

The U.S. has declared the world's second-largest chemical weapons stockpiles, 31,500 tons, and has completed destruction of about half of it.

Russia signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1997, pledging to eliminate its arsenal within 10 years. Both Russia and the U.S. have been granted a five-year extension to the original deadline.

Rogelio Pfirter, director-general of The Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, who attended Tuesday's plant opening, praised Russia for working to fulfill its pledge and called for international assistance in the effort.

Of Russia's three other chemical weapons disposal plants, two were built with foreign funding.

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OPCW to Prevent Chemical Weapons from Falling to Terrorists

Itar-Tass, 18 June 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will not cease to exist after the whole reported stock of chemical weapons in the world will have been destroyed by 2012, OPCW Director General Rogelio Pfirter told a press conference at the Itar-Tass headquarters here on Wednesday [June 18].

According to him, the OPCW will focus on encouraging those 11 countries, which have not joined the Chemical Weapons Convention yet, to join the Convention.

Meanwhile, Pfirter believes that the OPCW will control the production of new types of chemical weapons and will prevent chemical weapons from falling into the hands of international terrorists.

The OPCW chief recalled that the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force 11 years ago. As many as 130 countries signed the Convention in Paris in 1993 and it entered into force in 1997. At present 183 countries are signatories to the Convention. Six countries stated they possess a total of 8.7 million pieces of chemical ammunition, which contain 71,000 tons of highly toxic agents. These countries are destroying their stocks of chemical weapons.

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Pentagon Ordered to Speed Chemical Weapon Disposal in Colorado

GSN, 20 June 2008, http://www.nti.org/

The Colorado Health Department has issued a mandatory directive Wednesday requiring the U.S. Defense Department to move quickly on disposal of chemical weapons stored in the state, the Associated Press reported. Roughly 2,600 tons of mustard agent is stored at the Pueblo Chemical Depot. Preliminary construction is under way on a weapons destruction facility, which might not finish operations until 2021.

Congress has ordered that all U.S. chemical weapons be eliminated by 2017. Limited funding is a primary obstacle to meet earlier schedules, according to the Pentagon.

"The reason Defense doesn't have enough money to destroy the gas that remains at…depots around the nation is that it is spending the money elsewhere," said Health Department spokeswoman Jeannine Natterman. "They absolutely must obey" the state order.

The Pentagon has yet to receive the order, according to spokeswoman Kathy DeWeese. "Legal staff will address the question of the legality once they get a copy," she said.

However, the Defense Department said in a prepared statement that it intends by the end of this month to provide lawmakers with a report on strategies for finishing off the U.S. chemical arsenal between 2012 and 2017, AP reported. The Pentagon and the Pueblo Chemical Depot "share with all Colorado citizens the desire to have the Pueblo stockpile destroyed as safely and expeditiously as possible," according to the statement.

Meanwhile, the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission yesterday approved resumed use of incineration to destroy secondary waste from chemical weapons disposal at the Umatilla Chemical Depot, AP reported.

Waste disposal stopped following a successful court challenge from an environmental watchdog group. However, a state risk assessment report found there was little threat to human health or the environment in using existing incinerators to destroy protective suits, rags and other material. Other options for waste elimination would have been construction of a new incinerator, using a different system or transporting the items to another location for disposal.

The commission is set in August to decide how to deal with mercury found in 430 bulk containers of mustard agent set for incineration. Options being considered include placing filters on the existing incinerators, using a chemical and biological neutralization system or detonating the material within a closed containment device.

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VX Landmine Disposal Operations Completed at Pine Bluff Arsenal

CMA, 23 June 2008, http://www.cma.army.mil/

The Pine Bluff Chemical Activity (PBCA) and the Pine Bluff Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (PBCDF) successfully transported and destroyed the last VX nerve-agent filled landmine. Tuesday, June 17, PBCA safely transported the last enhanced onsite container (EONC) carrying VX-filled landmines to PBCDF. Friday June 20, PBCDF destroyed the last VX landmine, and the last VX agent drained from the landmine was destroyed later that day.

"The completion of the VX landmine campaign means the end of all VX-filled munitions stored at Pine Bluff Arsenal," said Lt. Col. Cliff Johnston, PBCA commander. "The storage risk to the community has been reduced by 99.9%."

The inventory of VX-filled landmines that had been safely stored, transported and eliminated was 9,378, approximately 94,000 pounds of VX nerve agent. The VX landmine campaign was the third of four disposal campaigns at the Arsenal.

"The safe and timely completion of this campaign marks a historic occasion for this community," said Mark Greer, PBCDF site project manager for the Army. "The entire original inventory of nerve agents at the Arsenal has been eliminated."

With landmine operations completed, the site is currently in a changeover period during which the facility will be prepared for and personnel will be trained in mustard ton container disposal operations. The mustard blister-agent filled ton containers will be the fourth and last disposal campaign.

"The end of the VX landmines represents another significant milestone for PBCDF and our nation. As we begin changeover we will continue our focus on safety as our employees move forward with the skills and expertise to complete our mission," said David Reber, project general manager for Washington Defense Group, EG&G Division of the URS Corporation, which built and operates the plant for the Army.

Chemical weapons disposal operations began at the Arsenal in March 2005 with the GB nerve-agent filled rockets. Prior to chemical weapons disposal operations, the Pine Bluff Arsenal safely stored 3,850 tons of chemical agent or 12 percent of the Army's original chemical weapons stockpile for more than 60 years. With the completion of the GB and VX weapons campaigns, PBCDF has eliminated more than one million pounds of chemical agent. The total percentage of chemical agent in the Arsenal's original stockpile that has been eliminated is 16 percent.

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Colorado Orders DoD to Meet 2017 Chemical Demilitarization Deadline

Defense Environment Alert, 24 June 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Colorado waste regulators have ordered the Defense Department to meet a 2017 federal deadline for destroying massive amounts of chemical munitions waste and stockpiled chemicals—four years ahead of a 2021 DoD deadline—shortly before the military is scheduled to submit a study to Congress on its options and budgeting for meeting the accelerated deadline.

The Colorado regulators issued an order June 16 setting the 2017 deadline for DoD to destroy hundreds of permitted containers of chemical munitions waste and thousands of stockpiled chemical munitions that are scheduled for on-site neutralization at an Army site in Pueblo, CO. The state regulators say a DoD plan to complete destruction of the munitions by 2021 "is not expeditious" and therefore violates an earlier hazardous waste compliance order.

The state decided to take action now as the Defense Department is on the cusp of releasing an assessment to Congress on options for destroying the weapons by 2017, a date that is not only mandated in federal law but is now enforceable by the state of Colorado under the new order. In acting now, Colorado wanted to get out ahead of DoD's congressional report and make it clear the state believes 2017 is completely reasonable given past schedules and costs the military previously generated for meeting that deadline, one state source says. The state fears that the budget the military calculates for meeting a 2017 deadline will be "unnecessarily and needlessly high" so it can convince Congress that it will be "very, very expensive to comply with 2017."

But a spokeswoman for the DoD program that oversees the Pueblo disposal efforts says "we have been considerably more focused on determining whether meeting 2017 is technically achievable, and less on cost. Once the costs are determined, it will be up to Congress to decide what the nation can afford and how the costs will be balanced among many priorities."

Pueblo is one of the last chemical weapons stockpile sites at which DoD is scheduled to finish destroying its weapons, and falls under the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA) program, which is destroying the weapons through neutralization, rather than the traditional incineration method.

Joe Schieffelin, the manager of Colorado's waste program, told military officials in a cover letter accompanying the order that after talks broke down between state and DoD officials, the state officials concluded the order is necessary to ensure compliance with state and federal waste requirements. "This is particularly true given the important budget deliberations that may pertain to the Pueblo weapons destruction project, for federal fiscal year 2009 and beyond, that are currently underway in Congress," he said.

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DoD said in a statement that it is planning to provide to Congress later this month an assessment of options for accelerating stockpile destruction by 2012, and no later than 2017. "Once Congress has reviewed that report, further direction from Congress on a path forward is anticipated," DoD says.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates earlier this year said the forthcoming report would "include an estimate of any additional resources that may be required to comply with this mandate." […]

According to the order, the Pueblo Chemical Depot has long been out of compliance with state hazardous waste regulations that limit the amount of time hazardous waste may be stored. The order requires DoD to file a chemical waste treatment plan within 60 days that lays out a project schedule for completing destruction of all the wastes by the end of 2017.

Attempts to negotiate a compromise enforceable agreement failed, according to the order. Colorado regulators had wanted DoD to commit to the 2017 deadline to resolve the disputed waste violations. The Colorado state source says the sticking point between the state and military was not over making 2017 an enforceable destruction deadline but over making interim timelines enforceable. By requiring the interim deadlines, the state did not want to allow the project to get so far off-course that officials would be unable to take interim measures, the source says. The unilateral order issued by the state will allow Colorado regulators to flag certain key tasks as enforceable interim milestones, the source says.

While Colorado has worked with DoD for a long time on the storage and destruction site, waste officials became concerned during the last couple of years when indications were the military was going to finish destruction of the Pueblo stockpile significantly after 2017, the state source says. "We just can't keep absorbing these big schedule delays," the source says, explaining that this is why Colorado decided to bring to bear its enforcement powers […]

Over the ACWA program's history, DoD has requested a budget that drastically dipped and then rebounded somewhat, as its level of priority fluctuated. In 2006, then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told Congress the United States would not meet the 2012 deadline set by the Chemical Weapons Convention, of which the United States is a party. Less than a year later, the Pentagon announced it would limit budgets for ACWA and stretch out the timeline, costing more in the long-run while bowing to other competing budgetary items.

The order is a final agency action and can be appealed by DoD in a court of law.

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Guinea-Bissau Designates OPCW National Authority

The Hague, 25 June 2008, http://www.opcw.org/

On June 19, 2008, Guinea-Bissau became the 184th State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). In compliance with its obligations as a new State Party to the CWC, Guinea-Bissau has informed the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) that it has designated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as its National Authority.

A National Authority is crucial to ensuring the effective implementation of the CWC within each State Party's national jurisdiction. Article VII, paragraph 4 of the Convention states: "In order to fulfill its obligations under this Convention, each State Party shall designate or establish a National Authority to serve as the national focal point for effective liaison with the Organization and other States Parties. Each State Party shall notify the Organization of its National Authority at the time that this Convention enters into force for it."

The National Authority has the responsibility of implementing the provisions of the CWC at the national level. To meet its basic obligations each State Party must be able to submit all the required declarations, communicate with the OPCW, cooperate with other States Parties, facilitate OPCW inspections, respond to OPCW requests for assistance, protect the confidentiality of classified information, monitor and enforce national compliance, and cooperate in the peaceful uses of chemistry. States Parties are also obliged to declare and to eliminate all chemical weapons stockpiles and chemical weapons production facilities. The National Authority plays an indispensable role in all of these activities.

As at 24 June 2008, 177 (96%) of the 184 States Parties to the CWC have established or designated National Authorities.

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Army Plans Overhaul of Buried Chemical Weapons Disposal

Superfund Report, 30 June 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Army is preparing a shakeup of the mechanisms used to respond to chemical weapons materials newly discovered at sites around the country that do not form part of documented stockpiles, under a new plan yet to be approved by the Defense Department (DoD) hierarchy. The plan would adopt a reorganized funding structure and make the Army the lead agency responsible for many aspects of the military response to such discoveries.

These proposed changes come as some environmentalists are questioning the adequacy of the military's program for disposing of such newly unearthed chemical weapons. These weapons do not, narrowly speaking, form part of the country's declared list of either "stockpile" or "non-stockpile" chemical weapons materials subject to elimination timetables under the international Chemical Weapons Convention, according to an Army Chemical Materials Agency source. Some environmentalists feel that as a result, they have received insufficient attention until now.

In an interview with Inside EPA, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health Addison "Tad" Davis said that the goal is to modify and rationalize the system in anticipation of faster detection and destruction methods for addressing buried chemical munitions and related material, such as chemical weapons detector kits. New technology now being introduced by the Army should allow for faster detection and destruction of buried chemical munitions, Davis said.

Under the proposed Recovered Chemical Warfare Material Implementation Plan, DoD would assign the Army secretary as executive agent for the Chemical Warfare Material Response Program, DoD's program that addresses disposal of discovered chemical weapons material caches.

"We want to look a little further into the future," said Davis, adding that improved detection and mobile destruction technologies should increase the pace of munitions disposal. According to Davis' staff, the plan would group the following functions: assessment of munitions with an unknown liquid fill; destruction of any munitions determined to contain chemical agent; support of explosives and munitions emergencies where presence of chemical agent is suspected; and sustainment of crews and equipment required to support chemical weapons material emergency responses and range clearance operations. Davis said this would group together emergency response functions used when chemical weapons materials are found for greater efficiency of response and simplification of the process.

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These activities would be funded from a single source, but all other range clearance or munitions response activities, such as site investigations and feasibility studies, would remain funded by the existing applicable program funded by individual military services. Hence the service-specific remediation programs now in existence would remain, but would lose some of their functions to the new centrally funded response program.

An Army spokesman says in a written response to questions: "DoD believes combining all support functions under a single entity would allow for improvement." Davis acknowledges that, although chemical weapons responses receive high priority and are professionally handled by the Army, there is room for greater efficiency.

The spokesman says the Army is the logical service to deal with recovered chemical weapons response, as it is already responsible for the majority of chemical weapons material sites, and possesses the most expertise for dealing with chemical weapons issues.

Davis said that new technologies should improve the search for buried weapons at sites suspected of containing chemical munitions, making wide area assessment more effective. Once weapons are discovered, the Army is keen to use its new "transportable detonation system" to process chemical shells more quickly than has previously been possible. The new system is "much more capable and sophisticated" than what has gone before, Davis said.

He said the Army proposes to conduct "archival research" on all the suspected chemical weapons sites around the country, in order to whittle down the number of sites to be further investigated. Such research would examine former land uses through available records to determine the odds of chemical weapons material being buried there.

Some environmentalists question the Army's commitment to dealing with the hundreds of suspected burial sites around the country, and the dedication of funds by DoD to address such issues. While the destruction of known stockpiles has been dogged by delays and accusations of underfunding from activists and some lawmakers, the problem of buried weapons has garnered less attention.

One source, with environmentalist group Global Green USA, questions whether the buried munitions have become the "poor relation" of the stockpile weapons. Another source, with activist group Chemical Weapons Working Group, concurs, and adds that the Army has so far not adequately estimated how much investigating and disposing of newly discovered munitions will cost.

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Army sources concede that more resources go into the disposal of stockpiled weapons, but that is because the numbers of stockpiled weapons disposed of each year are much larger, they argue.

On the funding level devoted to suspected burial sites, Davis adopts a wait-and-see approach. He said that archival review must be completed first to determine the scale of the task before the Army, and funding levels could then be readdressed if necessary. Funding for discovery and disposal of buried chemical weapons material currently comes from an array of funding streams within DoD, complicating comparison with the budget for stockpile weapons destruction, Davis' staff says.

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Japanese Government Seeks Cluster Bomb Alternative

The Daily Yomiuri, 22 June 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Japanese Defense Ministry has decided to start procuring new weapons, including new types of cluster bombs, from next fiscal year to replace its stockpile of cluster bombs, whose production and use will be banned after a treaty outlawing such munitions takes effect, sources said Saturday [June 21].

Last month, the government endorsed a draft treaty banning cluster munitions that was adopted at an international conference in Dublin attended by representatives of more than 100 nations. Its decision prompted the ministry to find alternative weapons to cluster bombs, which were regarded as effective in defending this nation due to its long coastline.

Cluster munitions, which contain several to hundreds of bomblets, can be used to bombard wide areas. But they pose lingering risks to civilians. Many people have been killed or maimed by unexploded ordinance after the end of armed conflicts.

New types of cluster bombs, however, will not be subject to the ban as they have fewer than 10 bomblets, which are equipped with self-destruct mechanisms, sharply reducing the risk of bomblets failing to explode.

The ministry is in the process of formulating a deployment plan that combines five to six measures to replace the cluster bombs in the possession of the Self-Defense Forces.

The measures are likely to include the replacement of cluster munitions currently loaded in multiple-launch rocket systems with new types of cluster bombs and those mounted in Ground Self-Defense Force helicopters with conventional munitions with a single warhead, the sources said.

The ministry plans to include the required costs in its fiscal 2009 budgetary requests to be made this summer.

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Nuclear Test-Ban Data to Help in Tsunami Warning

AFP, 25 June 2008, http://news.yahoo.com/

The body that oversees the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) offered its unique know-how Wednesday [June 25] to countries that ring the Pacific Ocean to warn them of killer tsunamis.

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) said that, by providing fast and reliable seismic and hydroacoustic data, it could help Pacific Rim nations "issue timely and reliable tsunami alerts".

"Agreements for tsunami warning purposes will shortly be concluded between the preparatory commission for the CTBTO and several organizations in Australia, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, the United States, Thailand and Malaysia," it said in a statement.

Data is already being provided to tsunami warning organizations in Australia, Japan, Malaysia and the United States, in the wake of the December 26, 2004 tsunami that killed nearly 220,000 people in southeast Asia.

Since that disaster, the international community has spent about 60 million dollars to set up a tsunami early warning system. Most of the funding went to Indonesia, which was hardest hit.

The preparatory commission of the CTBTO was established in 1996 to lay the groundwork for implementation of the nuclear test ban treaty once it enters into force.

Some 114 nations now are parties to the treaty, which however cannot take effect before it is embraced unanimously by a select group of 44 nations that includes China and the United States, which have so far failed to ratify it.

To enforce the treaty, a worldwide network of well over 300 monitoring stations—above ground, below ground and beneath the sea—is envisioned, providing data that could also help respond to tsunami threats.

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Talks Delayed, Indian Nuclear Deal Still Deadlocked

GSN, 18 June 2008, http://www.nti.org/

Indian politicians have postponed a meeting to discuss the deadlock over implementing a nuclear trade agreement with the United States, Reuters reported June 18.

The session between representatives of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government and some of his communist allies had been scheduled for today, but was ostensibly delayed for a few days because of other demands on government officials.

"We were informed that the foreign minister is busy with the Syrian president's visit and will be unable to attend the meeting today," said Nilotpal Basu, a leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee did, however, hold an informal session Monday with communist leaders who told him that they would continue to oppose the nuclear deal.

The tentative trade arrangement would enable India to buy U.S. nuclear materials and technology if New Delhi agreed to place the nation's civilian nuclear activities under international monitoring. Communist parties have criticized the deal as allowing excessive U.S. influence over Indian affairs.

The critical parties have threatened to withdraw their support for Singh's ruling coalition if he signs a monitoring agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency or otherwise tries to implement the deal without their approval.

Singh's officials have said they would not move without the communists' permission. They have lobbied the parties to end their opposition by arguing that the deal would also allow India to purchase nuclear technology from others nations, such as Russia and France.

Trade deal proponents fear that impending U.S. elections are killing the agreement's prospects because lawmakers in Washington, who need to issue a final approval, will soon be focused on their own re-election and the new U.S. president might not support the deal as vigorously as President George W. Bush.

"The window of opportunity is closing and if the dogmatic wax is not cleared from the ears of the communists then the deal is off," said Naresh Kumar, a former Indian envoy to the United States. "Whether the next governments of India and the U.S. negotiate it or renegotiate it, these are things that are in the realm of conjecture."

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Ahmadinejad Says West Failed in Iran Nuclear Crisis

AFP, 19 June 2008, http://www.spacewar.com/

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Thursday [June 19] the West has failed to break Iran's will in the nuclear standoff, days after world powers presented Tehran with a new offer aimed at ending the crisis.

"In the nuclear issue, the bullying powers have used up all their capabilities but could not break the will of the Iranian nation," Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying by state television.

World powers—Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States—on June 21 offered Tehran a new package of technological and economic incentives in exchange for suspending uranium enrichment activities.

The West fears the process might be used to make an atomic bomb although Iran insists it only wants to generate nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Ahmadinejad's comments were his first statement on the nuclear crisis since the offer was presented but it was not clear if they represented a reaction to the proposal.

The Iranian government spokesman has already said Tehran will reject any offer demanding it suspends uranium enrichment.

The U.N. nuclear watchdog has been investigating Iran's nuclear drive for over five years but has never been able to conclude whether the program is peaceful.

Iran has said it is examining the package but has so far showed no indication that it will change its defiant course in its nuclear drive.

Iran's ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency Ali Asghar Soltanieh ruled out on Wednesday that the country could freeze enrichment, saying: "Iran will never submit to such an illegal act."

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Syria Denies Bombed Site Was Nuclear Reactor

Associated Press, 30 June 2008, http://www.iht.com/

Syria's foreign minister on Monday [June 30] repeated his country's denials that a site bombed by Israel last year was a nascent nuclear reactor but said he wished his country had such a program to counter Israel's nuclear might.

U.N. nuclear inspectors visited the site in northern Syria last week to investigate U.S. allegations that Syria was hiding elements of a potential nuclear arms program.

Olli Heinonen, a deputy director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said he was satisfied with what was achieved on the four-day trip but that "there is still work that needs to be done" in following up on the claims.

Syrian authorities imposed a virtual news blackout on the inspectors' trip, and few details of the visit have surfaced beyond the fact that Syrian authorities allowed the three-man inspecting team to visit the Al Kibar site, which Israeli jets targeted in September. Syria has said the site was a non-nuclear military facility.

"As a Syrian citizen, I think that had Syria had such a secret program, it wouldn't have allowed inspectors to visit the site.... This is logic," Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem said at a joint news conference in Damascus with his Norwegian counterpart, Jonas Gahr Stoere.

"But as a citizen, I wish that Syria would have such a program because Israel simply has made strides in manufacturing nuclear weapons," he said.

Syria's vice president, Farouk al-Sharaa, said Wednesday his country allowed U.N. inspectors to visit the site destroyed by Israeli jets to prove that U.S. allegations of a covert Syrian nuclear program were false.

Al-Sharaa said, however, that the inspectors from the IAEA, the U.N.'s nuclear monitoring agency, will not be allowed to investigate beyond the Al Kibar site, despite a U.N. request to visit three other suspect locations.

Damascus strongly denies U.S. allegations that it is involved in any nuclear activities and fears that Washington could use the accusations to rally international pressure against it.

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Al-Moallem also said a new round of indirect peace talks between Syria and Israel will be held soon in Turkey, which has been mediating between the two sides for around a year. He said such talks are "good bases for direct negotiations."

"Like any process, there are ups and downs, but what is more important is that the two sides should go on with negotiations to reach these bases," al-Moallem said.

"There is a chance to achieve a just and comprehensive peace," he said. "We hope the Israelis will not miss it by their partisan differences."

Syria and Israel announced last month that they were holding indirect peace talks under Turkish mediation. Previous peace talks broke down in 2000 because of disagreements over final borders and peace terms.

The Norwegian foreign minister, who met with Syrian President Bashar Assad Monday, praised the indirect talks between Israel and Syria as a "courageous" step that requires the contribution by all parties.

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India Accepts It Cannot Buy Uranium from Australia

AP, 23 June 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

India accepts the fact that it cannot buy uranium from Australia without signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), the Indian foreign minister said Monday [June 23] during a visit to Australia.

Pranab Mukherjee said, however, that his government wants to learn more about Australia's proposal for an international committee to recommend changes to the 28-year-old treaty.

Mukherjee said after meeting Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith that he did not come to Australia to try to change the ruling Labor Party's policy on uranium sales.

"We are aware of the position of the Labor Party in Australia," he told reporters at a joint news conference with Smith. "Australia's commitment to nonproliferation is firm and we respect that."

Despite their differences on the uranium issue, both ministers declared their commitments to developing closer relations between their countries. They said they hoped to complete a feasibility study on the potential for a free trade agreement this year.

"There may be divergences of views in certain areas, but that divergence of views need not stand in the way of convergence of mutual interests and expanding on that," Mukherjee said.

In August last year, the former Australian government began negotiating a uranium trade pact with India to help fuel India's burgeoning need for energy. Those negotiations marked a major policy shift for Australia, which demands that all its uranium customers ratify the NPT and ensure that radioactive material is not put to military use or passed to a third country.

Australia's former Prime Minister John Howard argued that his country which holds 40 percent of the world's known uranium reserves could increase export earnings while helping India reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd defeated Howard's government in November elections and reaffirmed the ban on uranium exports to India.

Earlier this month, however, Rudd announced the formation of a committee which he hopes other countries will join to review the NPT by the end of 2009.

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Former Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, who was appointed chairman of the committee, said the world might need a new nuclear weapons treaty that countries such as India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea would be willing to join.

Monday's meeting was the Australian and Indian foreign ministers' first since 2005. It will be followed by another in September, when Smith visits New Delhi.

Smith later told Parliament that Australia had undervalued India, a rapidly growing market for Australian minerals and energy, for the past 30 years.

Also Monday, the two ministers signed extradition and cooperation treaties aimed at helping their countries combat terrorism and organized crime. Australia and India have also agreed to cooperate more closely on security, with their defense chiefs to meet annually.

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NPT in Urgent Need of Overhaul

AFP, 29 June 2008, http://news.google.com/

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which celebrates its 40th birthday this week, may have succeeded in keeping the number countries in possession of nuclear weapons down to a mere handful. But the treaty, drawn up during the Cold War period, is now in urgent need of an overhaul if it is to meet present-day challenges such as the proliferation crises in North Korea, Iran and most recently Syria, experts said.

Furthermore, the United States should take the lead in bolstering the legitimacy of the NPT and the entire non-proliferation regime by dismantling its nuclear arsenal, the experts said.

Opened for signature on July 1, 1968 and put into effect on March 5, 1970, the NPT is the most universal arms control treaty in force. Its stated goal is to stop the nuclear arms race and seek nuclear disarmament. Five countries that had tested nuclear weapons before the treaty's completion—China, France, Russia, Britain and the United States—were recognized as nuclear-weapon states and obligated to pursue "effective measures" toward nuclear disarmament. All others were designated non-nuclear-weapon states and prohibited from acquiring nuclear arms at all.

A major problem was that no specific target date was laid down for disarmament. And with the nuclear states apparently reluctant to dismantle and destroy their nuclear arsenals, the non-nuclear weapon states see little incentive to keep their part of the bargain.

It had created a world of "nuclear haves and have-nots ... which cannot be sustained indefinitely," said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association in Washington. He told AFP, "Nuclear weapons are dangerous no matter who possesses them."

K. Subrahmanyam, a former director of the Indian Institute for Defense Studies, agreed.

"It cannot be legal for some countries to possess a category of weapons while it is illegal for others to do so. A regime that is based on such inequity cannot be expected to be stable or secure against further proliferation," Subrahmanyam wrote in a recent article for the Arms Control Association.

Perhaps one of the NPT's biggest flaws is the limited power there is to enforce it. Inspections, carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, are voluntary and countries largely control inspectors' movements. Furthermore, there are no penalties for breaking the NPT, apart from being reported to the UN Security Council.

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Experts acknowledge the NPT's success in curbing the number of states in possession of nuclear weapons.

"In 1960, (US President) John F. Kennedy warned as many as 20 nations could acquire a nuclear weapon in less that decade. They didn't," said Joe Cirincione, President of the Washington-based Ploughshares Fund. Cirincione told AFP, "There are only nine countries with nuclear weapons today. Why? A big part of the reason is the bipartisan, multinational effort that lead to the NPT."

Thanks to the NPT, "there are now far fewer countries that have nuclear weapons or weapon programs than there were in the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s," the expert said.

Nevertheless, the non-proliferation regime had suffered important setbacks, notably the cases of North Korea and Iran, and more recently Syria. North Korea developed an illicit nuclear weapons program, which it is only now in the long and slow process of dismantling. Iran is accused of pursuing a weapons program under the guise of peaceful nuclear power and Syria has recently come under fire for allegedly building a covert nuclear facility.

"These recent setbacks are not the fault of the NPT structure, but rather a problem of enforcement and international support," said Cirincione.

"Too often 'realpolitik' will influence decisions like the Indian Nuclear Deal that undermine the treaty. The NPT is very clear. All proliferation is bad, not just proliferation among potential enemies."

Kimball similarly believes the United States is undermining the NPT, not only by repudiating its disarmament commitments, but by seeking to carve out special exemptions from the rules for allies such India. It was therefore up to the United States to take the lead if the NPT is going to survive, the experts said.

"Most of the 183 non-nuclear nations that have signed the NPT believe what the treaty says: No one should have nuclear weapons. It is time for the United States to mean it, too," said Cirincione.

"The NPT is not doomed to failure," said Kimball. "But in order to survive well into this century, states must renew, strengthen, and fulfill the NPT bargain—and soon."

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