

THURSDAY MORNING, 3 DECEMBER 1981

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Diversion of nuclear fuel for arms may go undetected, U.S. admits

By Robert Ruby
Sun Staff Correspondent

Washington—The State Department acknowledged yesterday that international safeguards may fail to detect the diversion of "peaceful" nuclear fuels for nuclear weapons. In response, a member of the Senate has demanded a ban on nuclear exports until safeguards are improved.

Richard T. Kennedy, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he agreed with a new study's carefully worded finding about the International Atomic Energy Agency—that with current techniques the U.N. agency's goal of detecting military use of nuclear fuels is "not generally attainable."

Mr. Kennedy is U.S. ambassador to the agency, which from its headquarters in Vienna administers international safeguards, conducting inspections and checking accounts to detect the diversion of plutonium and enriched uranium for military use.

At the same hearing, Senator Gary Hart (D. Colo.) urged the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to suspend exports of nuclear technology and materials, "at least until it is confident that diversion of nuclear material can be detected."

Victor Gilinsky, an NRC commissioner, after releasing a statement expressing a lack of confidence in the international agency, said the commission is still reconsidering its policies. He said he favors tightening export rules but not ending overseas sales entirely.

"The IAEA's weakness is that, in practice, it cannot enforce the standards agreed upon by its members," Mr. Gilinsky said. "It is hesitant to act against a member state, it accepts many constraints imposed by member states on inspections, and its senior officials tend to be overly cautious about facing important issues."

In its hearing, the foreign relations panel was breaking a long congressional silence about the IAEA, which Western nations generally regard as essential to prevent nuclear proliferation. Long-time nuclear specialists said the hearing was the first devoted specifically to IAEA safeguards since the agency was founded in 1957.

Democratic senators used the occasion to criticize the administration's overall nonproliferation policy as too permissive about worldwide sales of nuclear technology. The Reagan administration has said it wants to return to the United States to being a "reliable supplier" of nuclear know-how.

The administration also is considering asking Congress to take export licensing away from the NRC, which is considered too independent of White House desires, and give it to the State Department.

Many of the committee's questions con-

cerned safeguards in Pakistan, the American ally which is widely believed to be developing a bomb with technology acquired through dummy corporations buying from American and European firms.

The Senate has passed legislation, and the House is considering similar measures, to cut off \$3.2 billion in promised military aid if the country explodes a nuclear device.

In an unusual message to their board of governors, IAEA officials recently warned that they soon may be unable to account for all of Pakistan's nuclear material because the country now can fabricate its own reactor fuel.

Senator Alan Cranston (D, Calif.) said the opening of the fuel fabrication plant meant Pakistan had cleared the final technological hurdle in its weapons program.

Within the last five years, Pakistan is believed to have built small enrichment and reprocessing plants, the complex factories that refine plutonium and uranium into forms suitable for explosives.

The administration, Senator Cranston complained, has made it a policy not to inform Congress about safeguard problems in Pakistan in order to protect the military aid program from closer scrutiny.

Mr. Kennedy denied there was such a policy but indirectly confirmed that current IAEA safeguards are unreliable. The agency will be able to detect a military diversion in Pakistan, Mr. Kennedy said—but only after new IAEA cameras are installed and after inspectors step up the frequency of their visits.

While Mr. Kennedy minimized the agency's international role, committee chairman Charles H. Percy (R, Ill.) said current nonproliferation efforts depend on the agency's workings.

Those efforts are largely based on hopes that IAEA safeguards deter nations from acquiring nuclear weapons, that a country is unlikely to make a bomb if there is a high risk the work will be discovered.

The agency always has found it difficult to make inspections rigorous because it has been unable to make them politically acceptable to nations protective of their sense of sovereignty.

IAEA documents obtained by *The Sun* show that the agency never has been able to determine the worldwide inventory of plutonium, and thus faces enormous problems determining whether any is missing.

Of the 86 tons of plutonium the agency says it has responsibility for, the measurement of 52 tons, enough for about 6,000 bombs, is "estimated roughly."

Other witnesses, including two former IAEA inspectors, outlined what they said were other shortcomings in the agency, only some of which might be fixed with money or time.

They include an acknowledged lack of trained technicians, tight restrictions on where and when inspectors can travel and

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Senator Would Halt Nuclear Exports; Cites Weapons Risk

Associated Press

Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) yesterday urged a suspension of all American exports of nuclear materials until a U.S. commission is convinced that the International Atomic Energy Agency can prevent their use in developing nuclear weapons.

"The IAEA safeguards are little more than a facade," Hart told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Hart made the proposal at a hearing at which critics denounced the IAEA safeguards as ineffective and Reagan administration officials called the agency basically effective but needing improvement.

Hart called for the suspension of exports because of a letter by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission expressing concern that "the IAEA safeguards system would not detect a diversion" of nuclear materials.

Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) and other critics of the IAEA said that the agency should be retained and not replaced with some other international inspection system, but that it needs extended improvement.

Undersecretary of State Richard T. Kennedy told the committee he agreed with the critics' concerns, but said the administration strongly supports the IAEA and intends to help the agency overcome its weaknesses, including a shortage of manpower.

Kennedy said the IAEA not only guards against misuse of nuclear materials but searches for illegal weapons development, obtains treaty commitments against weapons development, and works for "restraint" in supplying sensitive nuclear materials and technology to countries that seek them.

extreme reluctance at the agency's top levels to find anything amiss.

Many of the problems were also noted in the study partially endorsed by Mr. Kennedy and prepared for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Both Mr. Gilinsky and Paul Leventhal, head of the Nuclear Club, Inc., a private organization, urged the IAEA to make more of its findings public. Virtually all the agency's information is classified, both in Vienna and Washington.

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U.S. is just as much a threat as Soviet, says Bonn lawmaker

Washington (Reuter)—A leader of the European peace movement yesterday called for an end to the assumption that only the Soviet Union is a potential aggressor, saying it was no more expansionist or imperialistic than the United States.

Karl-Heinz Hansen, a member of the West German Parliament, spoke at a press conference given by four of the movement's leaders at the invitation of an American peace group, A Citizens Organization for a Sane World, also known as SANE.

"The Soviet Union is no more expansionist, no more imperialistic in our eyes, than the United States," he said.

Mr. Hansen was recently expelled from the ruling Social Democratic Party for opposing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's planned deployment of Pershing II missiles in West Germany.

Another speaker, Gert Bastian, a former major general who resigned from the West German Army last year in protest against the NATO plan, said the 572 Pershing II and cruise missiles planned for Western Europe beginning in 1983 were unnecessary.

The speakers, who also included British MP Jo Richardson and Petra Kelly, leader of West Germany's antiwar ecological Green Party, criticized President Reagan's recent proposal to scrap the new NATO missiles if the Soviet Union dismantles its SS-20s and older SS-4 and SS-5s.

They said U.S.-Soviet talks on theater nuclear forces in Europe, which opened in Geneva Monday, should aim for a real "zero option"—ridding Europe of all nuclear weapons.

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The Federal Register

Here's a little insight into one direction the Navy and Marine Corps want to go in the Reagan administration multibillion-dollar defense buildup—air-cushioned, amphibious landing craft, as the new way to "hit the beach."

The Navy has developed and tested two prototypes for the Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) program and now plans to produce six of them.

But the Navy already is considering where to put them. What it has in mind, according to the Nov. 17 Federal Register (page 56493), is two fleets of 54 landing vehicles, one fleet based on each U.S. coast.

The Navy already has studied 15 military installations with the necessary prerequisites—ocean access, support facilities, 50 acres of potentially available land and "a mission not obviously incompatible with LCAC operations." The prime candidates have been narrowed to Navy bases at Camp Pendleton and Little Creek in Virginia and the Marine Corps base at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

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**U.S. Protests to Soviets
In Alleged Spy Plotting**

WEST BERLIN, Dec. 2 — The U.S. military government in West Berlin said today it had protested to the Soviet Union about an alleged spy affair involving a prominent Soviet diplomat in East Berlin.

The diplomat, a first secretary at the Soviet Embassy to East Germany, who was not named, was arrested by West Berlin security forces yesterday along with three members of the Soviet armed forces and an East German, a U.S. spokesman said.

The four Soviet citizens were handed over to their East Berlin embassy several hours after their arrest, in accordance with the four-power agreements on Berlin, he said. But the East German was presented to West Berlin police to face espionage charges. The five were apparently caught in a trap laid by the U.S. authorities and the security forces.

They were arrested as they met a U.S. soldier, reportedly there with the knowledge of his superiors, in what West Berlin security forces said was an apparent attempt to obtain secret information. There was no immediate comment from the Soviet Embassy.

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Now the Navy must develop an environmental impact statement for those areas, in part because the air-cushioned craft are very noisy—or at least their predecessors were when they were used in Vietnam.

* * *

—Walter Pincus

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**S. African Action Prompts
Angry Statement by U.S.**

Associated Press

South Africa's release today of 39 men allegedly involved in hijacking an Indian airliner from the Seychelles brought an angry reaction from American officials, and there was a suggestion from the State Department of possible sanctions against South Africa as a result.

The State Department had issued a statement Saturday strongly condemning both the coup and the hijacking and asking for "prompt and severe punishment" for those involved.

Sue Pittman, a State Department spokesman, today reflected the U.S. disappointment in the action by noting South Africa's participation in The Hague convention against hijacking.

The State Department called attention an agreement by the United States and six other major industrial nations at the Bonn Economic Summit in 1978 to cease all flights to a country that refuses to extradite or prosecute persons who have hijacked an aircraft.

The Warsaw Pact pledges to steer clear of a nuclear strike.

The Soviet Union and its six Eastern European allies also offered to dissolve the Warsaw Pact in return for the simultaneous dismantling of NATO. The group blamed the West for a "further deterioration in the international climate" and a "growing danger of war." Warsaw Pact countries, their foreign ministers said in a communique yesterday ending a two-day meeting in Bucharest, Romania, "did not and will not intend to create the first nuclear strike potential." Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko, senior diplomat at the meeting, was reported by Bucharest Radio to be staying on after the session for a "friendly visit" whose purpose was not disclosed.