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Articles & Other Documents:

[A New Old Nuclear Arsenal](#)

[Terrorists Could Use 'Insect-Based' Biological Weapon](#)

[My Word: Is this the End of the Nuclear Weapons Era?](#)

[Britain Grapples with Terrorist Threat](#)

[Global Insights: Prompt Global Strike Remains Strategically Problematic](#)

[Britain Grapples with Terrorist Threat: Part II](#)

[Soviets Stole Bomb Idea from U.S., Book says](#)

[Radical Islamists Linked to Al-Qaeda Set to Take Control of Somalia](#)

[Japan Sent Uranium to U.S. in Secret](#)

[Ethiopian Army Begins Pullout from Somalian Capital](#)

[Let's Commit to a Nuclear-Free World](#)

[Why Al Qaeda isn't Gaining a Foothold in Cambodia](#)

[Where has All the VX Gone](#)

[Pakistan Arrests Senior Taliban Aide](#)

[Pakistan Agencies Aided Mumbai Attack, Singh says](#)

[Bush Won Legal Fights in War On Terrorism](#)

[Why China Helped Countries like Pakistan, North Korea Build Nuclear Bombs](#)

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Sunday, January 4, 2009
Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

A New Old Nuclear Arsenal

By Michael O'Hanlon

For all their agreement on matters such as Afghanistan and defense spending, President-elect Barack Obama and Defense Secretary Robert Gates are on record disagreeing over a central matter for U.S. security: the future of nuclear weapons.

The issue is whether the United States should build the "reliable replacement warhead," a matter that has major ramifications for all U.S. nuclear policy, including whether to ratify the comprehensive treaty banning nuclear tests and whether we will be able to work with other countries to stem proliferation.

The reliable replacement warhead, known as RRW, which Congress has refused to fund despite repeated requests from the Bush administration, would not require nuclear testing -- in contrast to today's high-performance designs with their low margins for error. It would use more plutonium or enriched uranium and deliver a lower explosive yield for a warhead of a given size and weight.

Gates declared his support for RRW in October, saying "there is absolutely no way we can maintain a credible deterrent and reduce the number of weapons in our stockpile without either resorting to testing our stockpile or pursuing a modernization program."

Obama, however, has been emphatic that the country would not build new nuclear warheads on his watch. He wants to reinvigorate U.S. arms control and nonproliferation efforts.

If Obama wants the Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and commit the United States never to test weapons again, it appears that he will have to gather votes in the face of opposition from his defense secretary. Waiting until Gates leaves the Pentagon is not a good option: A review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is scheduled for early 2010 and U.S. ratification of the test ban treaty is probably a prerequisite for strong international support to extend and strengthen the NPT.

In theory, as president, Obama could simply overrule Gates. Reality, though, is not so simple. It was no accident that Gates made his speech to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace a week before Election Day, when rumors were floating that he might be asked to stay on. Gates apparently wanted his differences with Obama on this matter to be on the record.

And Gates' views on this are important. Not only is Gates highly regarded but, given historical Republican wariness about the test-ban treaty, Gates' hesitation would reinforce that of lawmakers. Only four GOP senators supported the treaty when the Clinton administration pushed for ratification in the late 1990s. Notable moderates voted against it, largely because of concerns about the viability of the U.S. nuclear stockpile without continued testing.

Even if Obama could get the next Senate to ratify the testing ban, the issue creates a political fight he does not need. But there's another option -- redefine the RRW program as a remanufacture of an older design and delay that program to allow Obama to create momentum for arms control.

Redefining the RRW might seem like semantics but is, in fact, a reasonable move. The United States developed more conservative weapons designs in the early years of the nuclear era that might be usable. Even if they had to be modified, the designs would remain more "old" than "new."

Moreover, building such warheads would not create new capabilities for American war planners but would deprive them of some targeting options they possess today while emphasizing safety and reliability.

Obama's budget request should not include money for the reliable replacement warhead. But his administration's first nuclear review should commit the United States to building more conservative and less deadly bombs by about 2015.

With any luck, Gates will consider this a reasonable compromise, and with his support the United States will ratify the long-delayed comprehensive test ban treaty during Obama's first year in office.

Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, was a nuclear weapons analyst at the Congressional Budget Office from 1989 to 1994.

http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/opinion/print_605486.html

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

My Word

Posted: 12/23/2008 12:01:00 AM PST

My Word: Is this the End of the Nuclear Weapons Era?

By Jon Rainwater and Rev. Dr. Rick Schlosser

AS WE END another year, we may also find ourselves at the beginning of the end of the nuclear weapons era. We will soon find out how seriously Barack Obama will pursue his exciting vision for a world without nuclear weapons. When he does, he will go up against formidable opposition, possibly including his own secretary of Defense. Robert Gates has been an ardent advocate for building a new generation of nuclear weapons.

Fortunately, Obama appears to recognize that nuclear weapons are relics from a time when Russia dominated U.S. security strategy and terrorism did not. This very question of the relevance of nuclear weapons remains on the minds of hardened veterans of the Cold War. The doctrine of "mutual assured destruction" carried us through the Cold War, they believed, but 21st-century enemies are no longer deterred in the conventional sense.

Our nuclear nightmares, which were once about "nuclear winter," now include "dirty bombs" that could destroy a U.S. city and we might never know who was responsible. Two prominent conservatives have arrived at a surprising solution to the threat of the rapidly expanding proliferation of nuclear weapons. Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, former Republican secretaries of state, now believe that we have to set our sights on freeing the entire world of nuclear weapons. They see the direct link between proliferation prevention and disarmament.

Last year, the two co-authored — with former Secretary of Defense William Perry and former Sen. Sam Nunn, two defense-oriented Democrats — an essay published in *The Wall Street Journal* that spelled out their vision. They called on the nuclear powers, led by the United States, to publicly commit to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons to be achieved through a series of mutually verifiable steps.

The steps include taking deployed nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert to avoid accidental launches; halting the production of fissile material, such as plutonium, needed to make a nuclear weapon; improving security for existing stocks of weapons and fissile materials; ratifying a ban on nuclear-weapons tests and negotiating deeper cuts in existing arsenals. The piece set jaws dropping. No one expected this plan from these former Cold Warriors. But it had the desired effect: Freeing the world from nuclear weapons is, to the mind of policy and political elites, no longer the dream of naive activists. It is practical. It is doable. It is necessary.

Like so many ideas that at first seem heretical, the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world achieved through a series of verifiable steps already enjoys the support of a sizable majority of Americans, according to comprehensive polling last year by WorldPublicOpinion.org. A new survey out in August by Harris Interactive and sponsored by the Campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Free World found that almost seven out of every 10 Americans believe possession of nuclear weapons by some countries encourages others to develop their own nuclear arsenals.

President-elect Obama has taken notice as well. During his campaign, he explicitly endorsed the vision and plan outlined by Kissinger, Shultz, Perry and Nunn in a speech last fall at DePaul University. His rival, Sen. John McCain, also endorsed the goal, articulated in his speech at the University of Denver in May. This is the first time in history that a president has been elected while running on a platform that includes charting a course to create a nuclear-weapons-free world.

We are witnessing the rarest of things with this growing support across ideological and political lines. At the start of the new year, the new president can resolve to do what is both right and popular, and provide the U.S. leadership that is needed to create a world free of nuclear weapons.

Jon Rainwater is executive director of Peace Action West and Dr. Rick Schlosser is executive director of the California Council of Churches.

http://www.insidebayarea.com/opinion/ci_11289754

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

World Politics Review
23 Dec 2008

Global Insights: Prompt Global Strike Remains Strategically Problematic

Richard Weitz

On Dec. 20, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov complained that the Bush administration's insistence on limiting the number of operational nuclear warheads, instead of the number of strategic bombers and missiles capable of delivering them, was the "main problem" preventing a new Russian-American strategic arms control agreement.

The question of how to treat long-range strategic delivery systems equipped with conventional warheads, and the extent to which they should be limited by any new arms control agreement, continues to separate the American and Russian negotiating positions. U.S. officials have been seeking an accord that provides both Washington and Moscow with considerable flexibility in converting nuclear-armed strategic missiles for use as long-range, high-speed conventional weapons. Russian political and military leaders, meanwhile, have been adamantly opposed to either side developing this option.

Members of the Bush administration have long seen such "prompt global strike options" as essential for attacking urgent, and perhaps fleeting, targets such as terrorists preparing to use weapons of mass destruction or hostile states readying long-range missiles for attacking the United States or its allies. The need for the capability to strike distant targets rapidly -- generally defined as hitting a target anywhere on earth in under an hour -- was emphasized in the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review and subsequent Department of Defense documents.

All three strategic delivery systems that comprise the traditional nuclear triad -- land-based Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and long-range heavy bombers -- are capable of attacking targets at great distances (over 5,000 kilometers), allowing a delivery platform based in Russia to reach the United States and vice-versa.

Although nuclear-capable strategic bombers -- such as the B-52s during the Vietnam War or the B-2s more recently in Iraq -- have long been used for launching non-nuclear weapons, their slower speed when flown from the United States gives other countries time to assess their mission and ordinance before having to consider a response. Yet, these same qualities exclude the use of U.S.-based bombers as prompt global strike weapons, since they would need many hours to reach distant targets.

The Defense Department initially focused its efforts to achieve a conventional rapid strike capability on converting existing nuclear delivery systems, such as the Trident SLBM, to carry conventional warheads. Current arms control agreements require the United States to reduce its number of nuclear-armed SLBMs, making some Trident systems superfluous. Numerous tests have also confirmed that the Trident represents a very effective and accurate strategic delivery platform. The Air Force, too, has evinced interest in the conversion option for some of its existing ICBMs, although it is also assessing whether to develop an entirely new Conventional Strike Platform.

The desire to reserve conventional prompt global strike options involving the conversion of strategic ballistic missiles like Trident has contributed to the Bush administration's reluctance to extend the existing Strategic Arms

Reductions Treaty (START) accord, which expires on Dec., 2009. In a written statement submitted for his July 2007 Senate confirmation hearing, Gen. James E. Cartwright, commander of the U.S. Strategic Command and the Bush administration's then-nominee for the post of vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, verified that the administration had decided not to extend START. Gen. Cartwright argued that allowing START to expire would give the administration more flexibility to pursue prompt global strike options and systems using conventional munitions "that contribute to national security and reduce our reliance upon nuclear weapons."

For now, the START II provisions remain in force, and reductions of delivery vehicles and nuclear warheads have proceeded as required. In May 2002, however, Washington and Moscow signed a new Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT). That accord obligates both Russia and the United States to reduce their long-range nuclear arsenals to between 1,700 and 2,200 "operationally deployed strategic warheads" -- far below START levels -- by Dec. 31, 2012. Unlike START, though, SORT only restricts the operational deployment of warheads, while imposing no limits on strategic delivery vehicles.

U.S. negotiators have pushed to have the next strategic arms control agreement impose limits exclusively on nuclear warheads (like SORT) rather than also constrain delivery vehicles (like START). Such an approach would allow both sides to exempt ballistic missiles or strategic bombers designated for conventional missions from the treaty ceilings even though they would retain the capability to deliver nuclear warheads.

Some American security experts outside of the U.S. government have also endorsed the idea of arming Trident SLBMs with conventional warheads pending the development of delivery vehicles designed specifically to launch conventional warheads at great distances and speeds. Advocates of their acquisition argue that without such strategic conventional weapons, American policy makers face an unpalatable gap in their range of choices, for now limited to forward-based U.S. aircraft and warships, which can only attack targets located close to their positions, and U.S. nuclear-armed strategic weapons, whose use would entail enormous and perhaps disproportionate diplomatic and human costs.

A few Russian military strategists have also expressed interest in exploring conventional strategic strike options. Russian government officials, however, have long attacked the concept of using long-range ballistic missiles, normally equipped with nuclear weapons, for strikes with conventional or even very low-yield nuclear weapons ("mini-nukes"). In a Sept. 11 address, for instance, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov denounced the United States for its deployment of missile defenses in much of the world, its alleged militarization of outer space, and its "doctrine of so called lightning-like global strikes" that entailed "working at full steam on a project to use non-nuclear warheads on strategic carriers."

Russian experts claim that Russia's early warning systems could easily mistake the launch of an American ICBM or SLBM, even if equipped with conventional warheads, as a nuclear strike against Russia. In retaliation, the Russian government would launch nuclear missiles at the United States before the presumed American warheads could reach Russian territory and destroy the Russian ICBMs in their silos.

Russian strategists also argue that the United States could employ even confirmed conventionally armed strategic weapons to conduct a devastating attack on key Russian targets, such as in strikes against Russia's nuclear command-and-control networks. Such an attempted "decapitation" strike would seek to disrupt Moscow's ability to organize a coherent retaliatory strike by rendering the elements of Russia's strategic command unable to communicate with their heads in Moscow or with other components.

More recently, some Russian analysts have expressed concern that, if not constrained by formal arms control agreements, the United States could simply load some of its nuclear warheads in storage on conventionally armed strategic delivery vehicles and convert them into nuclear strike weapons. Vladimir Evseev, senior researcher at the Russian Academy of Science's Institute of World Economics and International Relations, commented that, "Converting elements of strategic nuclear forces into non-nuclear antiterrorist forces does not exclude their being converted back. . . . [T]he U.S. will amass a reverse potential that could be rapidly converted into strategic nuclear forces."

Although American advocates of prompt global strike have replied that the United States could agree to adopt operational practices (e.g., providing Russia with advanced notice of any launch or basing conventionally armed

missiles in different locations from strategic weapons) to minimize the risks of such confusion, Russian diplomats have refused to negotiate such limitations.

Instead, Russian negotiators have sought to discourage American use of conventionally armed strategic delivery vehicles by demanding that any future strategic arms control agreement include a common ceiling for strategic offensive launchers, regardless of their payload -- effectively requiring the United States to sacrifice a strategic nuclear system for every prompt global strike weapon it deploys.

Congress, meanwhile, has generally refused to provide funds for placing conventional payloads on existing strategic ballistic missiles like the Trident. Many members have expressed similar concerns to those of the Russian government -- that Moscow could misinterpret a long-range conventional strike using strategic delivery systems as a possible American nuclear attack against the Russian Federation.

In recent years, Congress has allocated some funds for research into potential new prompt global strike systems, including hypersonic "payload delivery vehicles" envisaged by the Air Force and the Army, that would not resemble nuclear ballistic missiles while in flight, although legislators have yet to commit to deploying such systems. President-elect Barack Obama and his advisers have expressed a desire to reduce nuclear delivery vehicles, but have not enunciated a clear position regarding conventional strategic strike options.

Following Obama's election, even some members of the Bush administration began to express doubts about the Prompt Global Strike concept. In late November, for example, U.S. Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics John Young questioned the value of spending the enormous sums needed to allow long-range strategic delivery systems to carry conventional payloads. Young also noted that, since intelligence about the remote and ephemeral targets of such an attack would likely leave considerable room for uncertainty, U.S. policy makers would likely prove reluctant to order a strike that could inflict enormous collateral damage. "If I had to spend that much money on even a small number of weapons," he told reporters, "I ought to convince myself I have all the command and control authority and intelligence apparatus to exercise that way."

The Obama White House may well decide that the arms control issues, cost considerations, and operational difficulties posed by the prompt global strike concept warrant its termination. In the event it does decide to cancel the program, though, the Obama administration would be wise to delay any public move, and instead use an offer to restrain U.S. prompt global strike projects as one of the American concessions in the START follow-on negotiations with Moscow. In turn, Russia would be expected to show some flexibility in related areas, either within the context of the START-SORT negotiations, or perhaps in the stalemated talks over the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, which, as the name of the agreement indicates, also concerns non-strategic military forces.

Richard Weitz is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and a World Politics Review contributing editor. His weekly WPR column, Global Insights, appears every Tuesday.

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=3075>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
December 30, 2008

Soviets Stole Bomb Idea from U.S., Book says

By William J. Broad

A defining moment of the cold war came in 1955 when Moscow detonated its first hydrogen bomb — a weapon roughly a thousand times more powerful than atom bombs and ideal for obliterating large cities. The bomb ended the American monopoly and posed a lethal danger. So Washington dealt far more gingerly with Moscow, beginning a tense era dominated by fear of mutual annihilation.

Now, a new book says Moscow acquired the secret of the hydrogen bomb not from its own scientists but from an atomic spy at the Los Alamos weapons lab in New Mexico. Historians call its case sketchy but worthy of investigation, saying the book, "The Nuclear Express: A Political History of the Bomb and its Proliferation," by Thomas C. Reed and Danny B. Stillman, adds to a growing number of riddles about who invented the Soviet H-bomb a half century ago.

“It’s quite intriguing,” Robert S. Norris, a nuclear historian, said of the book. “We’ve learned a lot about atomic spies. Now, we find out that a spy may be at the center of the H-bomb story, too.” A surprising clue the authors cite is disagreement among Russian nuclear scientists over who deserves credit for the advance as well as some claims that espionage played a role. The book details this Russian clash and questions the popular idea that Andrei D. Sakharov, who later became known as a campaigner for human rights, independently devised the Soviet hydrogen bomb.

The book does not name the suspected spy but says he was born in the United States, grew up in a foreign country, fell in with communist sympathizers during the depression, and worked at Los Alamos during World War II. Afterward, it says, he became “deeply involved” in the American effort to develop the H-bomb. The book says that Mr. Stillman, a physicist who worked at Los Alamos from 1965 to 2000 and served for more than a decade as the lab’s director of intelligence, took his suspicions in the 1990s to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. But the F.B.I. inquiry, the book says, was “botched beyond recognition” and went nowhere. The alleged spy, the book adds, is now dead. The F.B.I., often accused of disarray in cases of atomic spying, declined to comment.

Historians and nuclear scientists call the book’s claim provocative if vague and seemingly circumstantial. They add that its suspect is unlikely to be the last put forward to account for the Soviet breakthrough. “It’s a fascinating puzzle,” said David Holloway, author of “Stalin and the Bomb” and a military historian at Stanford University. “Mystery is too strong a word. But exactly how the Soviet physicists hit on the idea remains unclear.”

Harold M. Agnew, who worked on the world’s first H-bomb and eventually became director of Los Alamos, said the Soviets probably had had numerous spies divulging the secret. “We were always surprised,” he said, “at how quickly they moved ahead.” The new book is due out in January from Zenith Press. A main focus is how spies spread nuclear secrets around the globe.

In recent years, the ranks of known Soviet spies in the Manhattan Project to build the atom bomb have swollen to a half dozen or so, and more are expected to be named. But so far, accounts of the ensuing project at Los Alamos to build the hydrogen bomb have documented no major episodes of atomic spying. Hydrogen bombs, unlike their atomic cousins, are unlimited in size. American scientists who sought to devise one in the 1940s and early 1950s thus called their dream weapon “the Super.”

The successful architects were Edward Teller and Stanislaw M. Ulam. Their 1951 breakthrough, known as “radiation implosion,” called for putting an atom bomb at one end of a metal casing and hydrogen fuel at the other. The flash of the exploding atom bomb was to flood the case’s interior with enough radiation to compress and ignite the hydrogen fuel, releasing huge bursts of energy through nuclear fusion.

In late 1952, the first test of their idea caused the Pacific island of Elugelab to vanish. The explosion was 700 times more powerful than the blast that leveled Hiroshima. Moscow had nothing comparable until 1955. It then made an arsenal of H-bombs that in time dwarfed Washington’s. It also detonated the world’s largest bomb — a behemoth more than 3,000 times as powerful as the Hiroshima blast.

Over the decades, scholars identified Klaus Fuchs as one possible source of H-bomb intelligence. The Soviet spy in the Manhattan project left Los Alamos in 1946, gave Moscow H-bomb ideas, and was arrested in 1950. But most scholars judge his tips as too early, too sketchy and too erroneous to have provided much assistance.

The authors of “The Nuclear Express” said in interviews that their interest in the issue stirred after the cold war as former Soviet nuclear scientists told of their hidden labors. Mr. Reed, a former designer of H-bombs at the Livermore weapons laboratory in California and a former secretary of the Air Force — met a number of the Russians scientists at Livermore in March 1997.

He said the meetings had proved eye opening. The Russian scientists described how Dr. Sakharov never took full credit for the hydrogen advance. And Lev P. Feoktistov, a member of the founding H-bomb team, suggested that espionage unrelated to Fuchs played a role. In his 1999 book, “Nukes Are Not Forever,” he reiterated that claim. “I cannot escape the feeling,” Dr. Feoktistov wrote, “that we were extended a helping hand once in a while, although quite inconspicuously.”

For instance, he said the Soviet team had been given an unfamiliar bomb sketch that he subsequently identified as having been the work of Ulam, the American H-bomb pioneer. The sketch showed a design that antedated the breakthrough of radiation implosion. Amid the revelations after the cold war, Mr. Stillman, at Los Alamos, zeroed in

on a candidate spy. In an interview, he said his suspicions had been aroused for a number of reasons, including the man's great apparent wealth.

Mr. Stillman said the F.B.I. inquiry fell apart in the 1990s as the bureau's Santa Fe office became entangled in the case of a modern alleged spy at Los Alamos — Wen Ho Lee. In time, all but one of the charges against Dr. Lee were dropped after a judge found significant flaws in the government's case. The episode is seen as having raised the federal bar on new claims of atomic spying. When Mr. Reed and Mr. Stillman began to collaborate on their book, they judged that they had complementary pieces of the H-bomb puzzle. In the book, they say they declined to name the Los Alamos suspect because he is now dead and “can neither defend his family name nor refute our arguments.” The actual identity does not matter, the books adds. “His fingerprints are what count.”

Reactions to the claim range from strong interest, to outrage, to curiosity about the identity of the alleged spy. For years, most Russian scientists and officials have insisted that the Soviet invention was completely independent of the United States, with the exception of preliminary intelligence from Klaus Fuchs.

Gennady Gorelik, a Russian historian of science now at Boston University and a Sakharov biographer, dismissed the idea that the Soviets had received the secret from newly disclosed espionage. “NO, THEY DID NOT,” he wrote in an e-mail message. Priscilla McMillan, an atom historian at Harvard and author of “The Ruin of J. Robert Oppenheimer,” said her weighing of old and new evidence had come down on Dr. Sakharov's side as the main inventor. “It's a tantalizing subject,” she said. “But I wouldn't preclude that his version is pretty much correct.”

John Earl Haynes, a Library of Congress historian and an authority on atomic spying, said the book's authors might have found a new spy at Los Alamos but he doubted their identification of him as a K.G.B. asset. If the spy existed, he added, he might have been controlled by the G.R.U, a military intelligence agency.

Richard L. Garwin, a top nuclear physicist who helped invent the American H-bomb and has advised Washington for decades, echoed Dr. Agnew in saying he found quite reasonable the idea that Moscow had espionage tips from Los Alamos about radiation implosion. “It is difficult to believe that U.S. security was so good that the Russians could not have picked up the term,” he said in an interview.

Dr. Norris, author of “Racing for the Bomb,” an account of the Manhattan Project, said solving the H-bomb riddle awaited more candor from Moscow. “The only way of clearing this up is for the intelligence services, the successors to the K.G.B. and the G.R.U., to claim their share of the credit,” he said. But he added that such openness could undermine Russian pride in its nuclear achievements during the cold war. “It cuts both ways,” he said. “It would really be a blow to the self image of the Russian scientists, who believe to this day that they invented it independently.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/30/science/30bomb.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Japan Times
December 28, 2008

Japan Sent Uranium to U.S. in Secret

By Kyodo News

Enough highly enriched U.S. uranium to make about 20 nuclear weapons was sneaked back to the United States from Japan over a 12-year period until last summer in a secret operation aimed at keeping it out of terrorists' hands, a senior U.S. official and Japanese specialists recently revealed. The uranium, which was provided to Japan by the United States to build five nuclear research reactors, totaled more than 500 kg.

Details of the special repatriation operations, initiated by the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration, a special wing of the Energy Department, have been kept under wraps for more than a decade for security reasons. The shipments began in 1996. The unique nonproliferation project, called the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, resulted in a total of 579.7 kg of HEU (highly enriched uranium) being returned securely to U.S. nuclear facilities, said Andrew Bieniawski, NNSA assistant deputy administrator for global threat reduction and director of the GTRI program.

"Japanese research reactors have been very successful in shipping their spent HEU fuel to the United States," Bieniawski said. "These shipments contribute to HEU minimization efforts worldwide and provide the reactors with a disposal path for their spent fuel." Since the mid-1990s, U.S. administrations have accelerated nuclear nonproliferation activities worldwide in order to prevent nuclear terrorism.

Four of the five reactors are in Ibaraki Prefecture and managed by the Japan Atomic Energy Agency. Two of its HEU-fueled reactors have already been closed due to proliferation concerns, and the other two were converted to use less-enriched uranium.

The density of Uranium 235 — and isotope key to chain reactions — in LEU is less than 20 percent, whereas weapons-grade HEU needs to be more than 90 percent pure. The JAEA was using 90 to 93 percent HEU fuel from the early 1960s to the mid-1990s, according to documents provided to Kyodo News. The JAEA has sent 523 kg of spent HEU to the United States. "The JAEA is an example for the world to follow. The JAEA has done 95 percent (of the entire repatriation)," Bieniawski said.

Takeshi Inoue, general manager of the Nuclear Material Management Office of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Science & Technology Center at the JAEA, said the JAEA plans to send over the remaining 5 percent in the next five years. The other research reactor is in a suburb of Osaka and operated by Kyoto University's Research Reactor Institute. The reactor, called KUR, started up in 1964 and used 93 percent-density HEU as fuel until it suspended operation in February 2006.

The institute is one of Asia's major nuclear training centers and accepts more than 3,000 researchers, including foreign students, each year. KUR suspended its operations to remove HEU fuel and repatriate it to the U.S. Kyoto University had returned about 50 kg of HEU by the end of summer. KUR will be converted to a LEU-fueled reactor by summer 2009, said Hironobu Unesaki, associate professor and director of the Office of Nuclear Material Management at the institute, who is a key contact with the NNSA for HEU repatriation and conversion operations.

The reactors were constructed in the 1960s in the context of "Atoms for Peace," the U.S. Cold War project advocated by President Dwight Eisenhower, which exported several dozen research reactors, HEU fuel and related technologies to allies including Japan, South Korea and South Vietnam. The Soviet Union rivaled this U.S. project and exported research reactors to its own satellite states.

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has become increasingly concerned about the exported reactors and the HEU, which could be used to develop nuclear weapons. In February 2005, President George W. Bush and then Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed on a plan calling for upgrading the security at Russian nuclear facilities and accelerating efforts to return the HEU the two former Cold War rivals distributed to research reactors around the world. Since then, the GTRI has ramped up the project and promoted worldwide operations with its Russian counterparts to secure "loose nukes" — the seeds of nuclear terrorism and other proliferation concerns.

The JAEA and Kyoto University have taken collaborative steps with the NNSA and paid expenses for shipping, storing and handling the HEU repatriated to the U.S., even though the Japanese government made no financial or manpower contribution to past or ongoing operations. "The Japanese government hasn't taken any financial or human support for the HEU repatriation operations," said one official of the Nuclear Power Regulation Office at the Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry.

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20081228a1.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Wall Street Journal

OPINION

JANUARY 3, 2009

Let's Commit to a Nuclear-Free World

Bush's attempts to enlarge our arsenal sent precisely the wrong message.

By DIANNE FEINSTEIN

When Barack Obama becomes America's 44th president on Jan. 20, he should embrace the vision of a predecessor who declared: "We seek the total elimination one day of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth."

That president was Ronald Reagan, and he expressed this ambitious vision in his second inaugural address on Jan. 21, 1985. It was a remarkable statement from a president who had deployed tactical nuclear missiles in Europe to counter the Soviet Union's fearsome SS-20 missile fleet.

President Reagan knew the grave threat nuclear weapons pose to humanity. He never achieved his goal, but President Obama should pick up where he left off.

The Cold War is over, but there remain thousands of nuclear missiles in the world's arsenals -- most maintained by the U.S. and Russia. Most are targeted at cities and are far more powerful than the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Today, the threat is ever more complex. As more nations pursue nuclear ambitions, the world becomes less secure, with growing odds of terrorists obtaining a nuclear weapon.

The nuclear aspirations of North Korea and Iran threaten a "cascade" of nuclear proliferation, according to a bipartisan panel led by former U.S. Defense Secretaries William J. Perry and James R. Schlesinger.

Another bipartisan panel has warned that the world can expect a nuclear or biological terror attack by 2013 -- unless urgent action is taken.

Nuclear weapons pose grave dangers to all nations. Seeking new weapons and maintaining massive arsenals makes no sense. It is vital that we seek a world free of nuclear weapons. The United States should lead the way, and a President Obama should challenge Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to join us.

Many of the world's leading statesmen favor such an effort. They include former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, former Defense Secretary Perry, former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, and former Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn.

Unfortunately, for eight years the Bush administration moved in another direction, pushing aggressive policies and new weapons programs, threatening to reopen the nuclear door and spark the very proliferation we seek to prevent.

President Bush made it the policy of the United States to contemplate first use of nuclear weapons in response to chemical or biological attack -- even against nonnuclear states.

He changed the "strategic triad" -- which put nuclear weapons in a special category by themselves -- by lumping them with conventional weapons in the same package of battlefield capabilities. This blurred the distinction between the two, making nuclear weapons easier to use.

And he advocated new types of weapons that could be used in a variety of circumstances against a range of targets, advancing the notion that nuclear weapons have utility beyond deterrence.

Mr. Bush then sought funding for new weapons programs, including:

- A 100-kiloton "bunker buster" that scientists say would not destroy enemy bunkers as advertised, but would have spewed enough radiation to kill one million people.
- The Advanced Concepts Initiative, including developing a low-yield nuclear weapon for tactical battlefield use.
- The Modern Pit Facility, a factory that could produce up to 450 plutonium triggers a year -- even though scientists say America's nuclear triggers will be good for years.
- Pushing to reduce time-to-test readiness at the Nevada Test Site in half -- to 18 months -- signaling intent to resume testing, which would have broken a test moratorium in place since 1992.
- A new nuclear warhead, called the Reliable Replacement Warhead, which could spark a new global arms race.

I opposed these programs, and Congress slashed or eliminated funding for them.

But President Bush had sent dangerous signals world-wide. Allies could conclude if the United States sought new nuclear weapons, they should too. Adversaries could conclude acquiring nuclear weapons would be insurance against pre-emptive U.S. attack.

Here's how President-elect Obama can change course. By law he must set forth his views on nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy, in his Nuclear Posture Review, by 2010. In it, he should commit the U.S. to working with Russia to lower each nation's arsenal of deployed nuclear warheads below the 1,700-2,200 the Moscow Treaty already calls for by 2013.

It would be a strong step toward reducing our bloated arsenals, and signal the world that we have changed course.

I was 12 when atomic bombs flattened Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing more than 200,000 people. The horrific images that went around the world have stayed with me all my life.

Today, there are enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world hundreds of times. And we now face the chilling prospect of nuclear terrorism.

The bottom line: We must recognize nuclear weapons for what they are -- not a deterrent, but a grave and gathering threat to humanity. As president, Barack Obama should dedicate himself to their world-wide elimination.

Mrs. Feinstein, a Democratic senator from California, will chair the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in the 111th Congress.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123094493785650643.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Strategy Page
5 January 2009

Where has All the VX Gone

NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS

January 3, 2009: The United States has completed the destruction of the last of its nerve gas weapons stored in the United States. The 66 month effort destroyed 293,000 gallons (over a million liters) of VX and Sarin nerve agent, by incineration. These weapons were stored, for nearly half a century, in underground bunkers in the Anniston Army Depot, 80 kilometers east of Birmingham, Alabama.

Last year, the last of 478,000 M55 115mm nerve gas rockets were destroyed. These 78 inch long, 57 pound, weapons, each carried ten pounds of VX or GB liquefied nerve gas. These rockets were manufactured from the late 1950s, to the early 1960s, and were soon considered obsolete (because of short range and poor construction). It was believed that the propellant would become increasingly liable to spontaneously ignite. Another problem was that the warheads leaked, and required constant monitoring.

Over the last 18 years, about half the U.S. stock of 31,500 tons of chemical weapons (mainly nerve and mustard gas). The destruction is taking place at seven sites. The incineration plant at Anniston will be closed, for about six months, and converted to destroy the mustard gas stored there. Mustard is a more complex chemical, as far as incineration goes, but is less lethal than nerve gas.

<http://www.strategypage.com/htm/htchem/articles/20090103.aspx>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

January 6, 2009

Pakistan Agencies Aided Mumbai Attack, Singh says

By Bibhudatta Pradhan and James Rupert

Jan. 6 (Bloomberg) -- "Official agencies" in Pakistan supported the militants who attacked Mumbai in November, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said, making India's sharpest accusation yet that Pakistan's government was involved.

"There is enough evidence to show that, given the sophistication and military precision of the attack it must have had the support of some official agencies in Pakistan," Singh told chief ministers of India's states today at a meeting on counter-terrorism.

India yesterday gave Pakistan and other governments what it said was evidence linking Pakistani "elements" to the Nov. 26-29 attack on Mumbai, increasing pressure on its neighbor to act against the militant group India has blamed for the assault. It is unclear how long Pakistan will need to judge the evidence and decide on any action, Farhatullah Babar, a spokesman for Pakistan's president, told India's NDTV television today.

The comments by Singh "are the most explicit accusation so far" of a role by Pakistani official agencies, said Ajai Sahni, executive director of the Institute for Conflict Management, a New Delhi-based research group. They come as India appealed this week to foreign governments, including Pakistani allies such as the U.S. and China, to press Pakistan to help bring the plotters behind the attacks to justice.

Lashkar-e-Taiba

The Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba carried out the attacks in India's financial hub that killed 164 people, Singh said. Pakistan has been using terrorism as an "instrument of state policy," he said.

In the six-decade Indian-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate gave arms and logistical help to Lashkar-e-Taiba for attacks on India in the 1990s, Indian and U.S. officials and independent Pakistani analysts say. While Pakistan formally banned Lashkar and several other jihadist groups in 2002, it never prosecuted their leaders, who remained active, according to Hassan Abbas, a former senior Pakistani police official who is now a researcher on Pakistani affairs at Harvard University.

India has demanded that Pakistan dismantle Lashkar and other militant networks on its territory whose attacks have increased tensions between the neighbors, and interrupted a five-year-old peace process.

Indian Politics

Singh's government will seek re-election in May amid public demands for improved security. At least 1,500 people were killed in attacks last year. India has been combating rebels in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and Maoist guerrillas in the southern and eastern regions.

"Today, even as Pakistan engages in whipping up war hysteria, our nation remains steadfastly united," Singh said. "If anything, the process of national consolidation is becoming stronger."

Singh said Pakistanis have infiltrated terrorists into India through Nepal and Bangladesh as well as the India-Pakistan cease-fire line in Kashmir, which forms the de-facto border between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

"During the past year, we faced a severe challenge from terrorist groups operating from outside the country," Singh said. "Many of them act in association with hostile intelligence agencies in these countries," he said without identifying them.

War Unaffordable

Singh repeated his government's commitment to confront Pakistan through diplomacy rather than armed force. With the global economic crisis slowing growth in both India and Pakistan, neither can afford a military clash, officials say.

The U.S. fears a conflict would scuttle Pakistan's attempts to contain the Taliban insurgency along its border with Afghanistan and has urged restraint on both India and Pakistan.

"We must convince the world community that states that use terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy must be isolated and compelled to abandon such tactics," Singh said.

Terrorism, political extremism and insurgency are major challenges to India's internal security.

"Leftwing extremism is primarily indigenous and home grown," Singh said. "Terrorism, on the other hand, is largely sponsored from outside the country, mainly Pakistan."

Singh called for a strengthening of intelligence and more training and equipment for security forces. "Both the center and the state governments must attend to this national task with speed, efficiency and utmost dedication."

To contact the reporter on this story: Bibhudatta Pradhan in New Delhi at bpradhan@bloomberg.net; James Rupert in New Delhi at jrupert3@bloomberg.net.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20670001&refer=india&sid=afY3PvTO8mF8>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

U.S. News & World Report (USNews.com)

January 2, 2009

Why China Helped Countries like Pakistan, North Korea Build Nuclear Bombs

Former U.S. Air Force Secretary Thomas Reed knows nuclear bombs better than most people. For starters, he designed two of them when he worked at the Livermore National Laboratory as a weapons designer.

His new book *The Nuclear Express: A Political History of the Bomb and Its Proliferation*, co-written with Danny Stillman, the former director of the technical intelligence division at Los Alamos National Laboratory, rewrites much of the public understanding about how countries with nuclear weapons came to acquire them. All countries that built bombs, including the United States, spied on or were given access to the work of other nuclear powers. In particular, the book is a scathing indictment of the Chinese government, alleging that it intentionally proliferated nuclear technology to risky regimes, particularly Pakistan.

Reed recently spoke with *U.S. News's* Alex Kingsbury. Excerpts:

How has the Chinese government reacted to the allegations in your book?

At first, they objected to some of this reporting, which was first published in *Physics Today*, but they later withdrew all objections. The Chinese experts in the weapons labs were probably surprised that we found out all this information and were able to put it all together. In public they say one thing, but behind closed doors and after hours, they are more open. All scientists want the credit for having solved certain problems by themselves without outside help. In fact, in 1949 Klaus Fuchs spied for the Soviets at Los Alamos and when he was released from prison in 1959, fled to East Germany where he met China's chief atomic bomb scientist to whom he explained the inner workings of the Fat Man bomb [which the United States dropped on Nagasaki in 1945].

What was the Chinese strategy behind encouraging proliferation once they had mastered the atomic bomb? The way you describe the Chinese intentionally spreading nuclear technology to countries like Pakistan and North Korea seems both shockingly lax and shortsighted.

Shockingly lax? Yes. Shortsighted I'm not so sure.

Think of it as three constituencies: China in about 1982, under Deng Xiaoping, decided to proliferate nuclear technology to communists and Muslims in the third world. They did so deliberately with the theory that if nukes ended up going off in the western world from a Muslim terrorist, well that wasn't all bad. If New York was reduced to rubble without Chinese fingerprints on the attack, that left Beijing as the last man standing. That's what the old timers thought.

The current Chinese government is far more cautious, though it continued to push technology to North Korea. When the North Koreans decided to test, they clearly did so without a Chinese permit and it really frosted the Chinese because it threatened to prompt Japan and South Korea to start their own programs. They didn't worry about terrorism at all.

The younger generation is adamant about keeping a lid on nuclear technology. They don't want to see Los Angeles blown up because they just sold us 10,000 pairs of sneakers. Those last two forces are contending with each other and it remains to be seen what will happen.

Why, as you say in the book, did the Chinese give the technology to Pakistan?

Pakistan can be explained by a balance of power: India was China's enemy and Pakistan was India's enemy. The Chinese did a massive training of Pakistani scientists, (just like the Russians had done for them) brought them to China for lectures, even gave them the design of the CHIC-4 device, which was a weapon that was easy to build a model for export. There is evidence that A.Q. Khan used Chinese designs in his nuclear designs. Notes from those lectures later turned up in Libya, for instance. And the Chinese did similar things for the Saudis, North Koreans, and the Algerians.

Did the Chinese further assist in the Pakistan program?

Under Pakistani president Benazir Bhutto, the country built its first functioning nuclear weapon. We believe that during Bhutto's term in office, the People's Republic of China tested Pakistan's first bomb for her in 1990. There are numerous reasons why we believe this to be true, including the design of the weapon and information gathered from discussions with Chinese nuclear experts. That's why the Pakistanis were so quick to respond to the Indian nuclear tests in 1998. It only took them two weeks and three days. When the Soviet Union took the United States by surprise with a test in 1961, it took the U.S. seventeen days to prepare and test, a device that had been on hand for years. The Pakistani response makes it clear that the gadget tested in May 1998 was a carefully engineered device in which they had great confidence.

Is sharing nuclear tests common?

The United States conducted nuclear tests in Nevada openly and with full disclosure in the 1990s on behalf of our U.K. allies. We speculate on Israeli access to the U.S. test results. For their part, the Chinese admitted to having conducted hydronuclear and radiation effects tests for France, but most tellingly they also implied—they certainly did not deny—the test of a Pakistani device. The South Africans also apparently worked with the Israelis on a nuclear test in the South Pacific in 1979.

Are Chinese proliferation programs ongoing?

Since 1991, China has been assisting the raw-materials side of the Iranian nuclear program with shipments of uranium, instructions on the design of a conversion facility in Eshfahan, and an enrichment facility at Karaj. China has been using North Korea as the re-transfer point for the sale of nuclear and missile technology to Iran, Syria, Pakistan, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen.

You also write that Israel was given assistance in developing their bomb while the United States looked the other way.

In the wake of the Suez crisis in 1956, the French and the Israelis initiated a joint nuclear weapons program that resulted in a test in the Algerian desert. At that test in 1960, two countries went nuclear with one shot.

Is the world safer or more dangerous with all these powers?

The world is safer for having all the permanent UN Security Council members possess nuclear weapons. I think having North Korea, Pakistan, and India is probably not a good idea. Nuclear proliferation, above all, is not inevitable as many thought at the dawn of the nuclear age.

<http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/world/2009/01/02/why-china-helped-countries-like-pakistan-north-korea-build-nuclear-bombs.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

London Daily Telegraph
05 January 2009

Terrorists Could Use 'Insect-Based' Biological Weapon

By Stephen Adams

Jeffrey Lockwood, professor of entomology at Wyoming University and author of *Six-legged Soldiers: Using Insects as Weapons of War*, said such Rift Valley Fever or other diseases could be transported into a country by a terrorist with a suitcase.

He told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "I think a small terrorist cell could very easily develop an insect-based weapon."

He said it would "probably be much easier" than developing a nuclear or chemical weapon, arguing: "The raw material is in the back yard."

He continued: "It would be a relatively easy and simple process.

"A few hundred dollars and a plane ticket and you could have a pretty good stab at it."

Governments, he advised, needed to have robust "pest management infrastructure that's able to absorb and respond to an introduction" of infected insects, he said.

Trying to stop everything coming in at the border would not work, he said.

Rift Valley Fever is an east African disease which "can cause severe disease in both animals and humans, leading to high rates of disease and death" according to the World Health Organisation.

However, WHO says that "the vast majority of human infections result from direct or indirect contact with the blood or organs of infected animals."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/wildlife/4123782/Terrorists-could-use-insect-based-biological-weapon.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

World Politics Review
24 Dec 2008

Britain Grapples with Terrorist Threat

Douglas Davis

LONDON -- In the aftermath of the Mumbai slaughter, Britain has increased pressure on Pakistan to deal decisively with the radicalization of young Muslims in its Saudi-funded madrassas and in the al-Qaida training camps that flourish in the lawless tribal areas along its porous border with Afghanistan.

Britain has cause for concern. On a visit to Islamabad this month, Prime Minister Gordon Brown revealed that more than 20 serious terrorist plots against Britain -- about three-quarters of the active plots currently monitored by Britain's MI5 intelligence service -- are being planned in Pakistan. And he told President Ali Asif Zardari that, "the time has come for action, not words."

Brown demanded that Zardari's government exert the political will to crack down on al-Qaida and allied Islamist groups. What happens in the mountains of Afghanistan and Pakistan, he said, "can affect directly what happens on the streets of our towns. I want to remove the chain of terror."

That might be easier said than done. Despite pressure from the West and from its Indian neighbor, successive Pakistani governments have been unwilling or unable -- perhaps both -- to deal decisively with its powerful and pervasive Inter-Services Intelligence Agency, which created and continues to nurture many of the Islamist groups.

But Pakistan is not the only source of the continuing and expanding terror threats confronting Britain. Just before retiring as head of MI5 last year, Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller warned that Britain was "a center of intense activity." There was, she added, a "very real possibility" that al-Qaida and its franchises were planning mass murder, using chemical, biological, radioactive and even nuclear weapons.

The scale of the challenge is daunting. MI5's budget has doubled since 9/11, but that seems barely sufficient to keep tabs on some 2,000 "priority one" terrorist targets in Britain, six times greater than the number in 2001. Even that might be just the tip of the iceberg. According to Dame Eliza's successor, Jonathan Evans, "we suspect that there are as many again that we don't yet know of."

Whatever the number, security sources estimate that up to 4,000 Islamic extremists in Britain have attended terrorist training camps in Afghanistan or in Taliban-controlled territory in the Pakistan-Afghan tribal areas. Some have gone on to join the jihad against coalition forces in southern Afghanistan, but most of these "Brit-Paks" (British passport-holders of Pakistani origin) are believed to have returned to their communities in Britain, fully trained and operational, where they have been inducted into al-Qaida "sleeper cells."

The slide toward Islamist radicalism, as represented by the statistics, is alarming. But the greatest cause for alarm is not only that the current threat might be greater than the ability of the security forces to contain, but that the figures might have been hopelessly underestimated.

After the 2005 suicide bombings of London's transportation network, then-Prime Minister Tony Blair announced that "the rules of the game have changed," referring to the cozy arrangement whereby Britain's security services turned a blind eye on incendiary imams radicalizing young Brit-Paks so long as no blood was shed on British streets.

But the change came too late. Not only is the number of radicalized young Muslims increasing, but the age of those caught up in the process is falling. In the profusion of political analysis and moral stocktaking over why so many young Muslims are predisposed to turning on the state that has nursed and nourished them, there have been no shortage of targets for recrimination.

Muslim intellectuals blame both British society and moderate Muslims for the expansion of jihadist ideology in Britain. Ed Husain, himself a former extremist and author of "The Islamist," believes the problem will keep growing as long as the wider British community infantilizes Muslims by failing to "interfere" in the radicalization process for fear of giving "offense."

Dilwar Hussain, head of the policy research center at the Islamic Foundation, lays the blame more squarely on the Muslims themselves. "Much could be said about Britain's foreign policy mistakes in stoking injustice, leading to anger and frustration," he says. "But to blame only such foreign affairs for terrorism is not nearly enough. Muslims did not challenge strongly enough the preachers of hate and the peddlers of simplistic, yet nihilistic, solutions that were able to tap into that anger and frustration."

Meanwhile, the British establishment has responded by putting its trust -- and its hope -- in its security services. Although the latter have tried to attract Muslim recruits, the uptake is not known, nor do observers have high hopes that the new recruits will succeed in penetrating the deeply opaque cells of fundamentalist extremism.

But the government has not stopped there. Confronted by the sheer scale of the threat, it has enacted wide-ranging anti-terrorist legislation that has increased the powers of police and the intelligence agencies. Now, however, some legislators believe the delicate balance between civil rights and public security has tipped too far in favor of the security services -- and that the legislation is being abused.

Douglas Davis is a writer and journalist currently based in London. His work appears in the Spectator (London) and the National Post (Toronto). Previously he was a senior editor and European correspondent for the Jerusalem Post. His most recent book is "Israel in the World: Changing Lives through Innovation."

Photo: Russell Square, London, cordoned off following the bombings of July 7, 2005 (Francis Tyers, licensed under the GNU Free Documentation License).

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/Article.aspx?id=3079>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

World Politics Review

31 Dec 2008

Britain Grapples with Terrorist Threat: Part II

Douglas Davis LONDON

-- Simmering concern over the abuse of Britain's post-9/11 anti-terrorist legislation turned to public outrage last month, when nine anti-terrorist officers used their expanded powers to raid the home, parliamentary office and constituency headquarters of senior opposition Conservative legislator, Damian Green.

Green was arrested and questioned for nine hours on suspicion of "aiding and abetting, counseling or procuring misconduct in a public office." It is an offense that carries a life sentence and that, if rigorously applied, would consign many journalists -- and not a few politicians -- to jail cells.

Green was suspected of receiving leaks from a civil servant which were embarrassing Gordon Brown's Labor government. The leaks included a letter from Home Secretary Jacqui Smith to Brown over the likely impact of the economic downturn on crime and the voting intentions of Labor legislators on upcoming legislation. Two other leaks related to the employment of illegal immigrants. There is no suggestion that any of the issues would have had any effect on national security.

"When the state starts arresting elected parliamentarians for saying things it says they shouldn't, alarm bells should ring," said Professor Gary Slapper, director of the Center for Law at the Open University. Warning of an erosion of democracy, he noted that, "leaks are committed all the time, often with the apparent complicity of government ministers, and no criminal investigations follow."

The affair did not end there. Tempers flared again when Britain's anti-terror police chief, Assistant Commissioner Bob Quick, accused the Conservative Party of having "mobilized . . . in a wholly corrupt way" to undermine the investigation against Green. Despite a subsequent apology from Quick, his career is unlikely to recover. Meanwhile, senior police sources revealed (read: leaked) that they do not, after all, expect Green to be prosecuted following the raids on his home and offices.

Even before the recent convulsion, David Cameron's Conservatives, ahead in the polls, had indicated a retreat from earlier automatic support for anti-terror legislation. Skeptical about the efficacy of handing increasing powers to the police, Cameron argued that further erosions of civil liberties would not deliver significantly greater public security. Last June, the Conservatives showed they meant business when they opposed a government proposal that would have permitted police to hold terror suspects for up to 42 days without charge. The new libertarian spirit crossed the aisle and, supported by Labor rebels, Cameron came within seven votes of defeating the bill.

Meanwhile, more damaging to the credibility of police than their clumsy handling of the Damian Green arrest have been a slew of revelations demonstrating that they have abused their enhanced anti-terror powers. It is now clear that at least some of the 10,000 surveillance operations conducted under the emergency legislation over the past year have been aimed at a broad spectrum of obviously non-terrorist offenses.

One local authority invoked anti-terrorist powers to investigate a family it suspected -- wrongly -- of breaking rules on school admissions. Others used the anti-terrorist surveillance powers to monitor offenses ranging from dog fouling and underage smoking to regulatory infractions such as fishermen suspected of gathering shellfish illegally and a garden nursery suspected of selling potted plants unlawfully.

Last month, a couple who run a newspaper delivery service was convicted of employing eight delivery boys without the appropriate permits. The case was based on evidence gathered by undercover agents under the anti-terror laws. The couple, who claimed there had been a "mix up" with the paperwork, was given a conditional discharge.

Former Home Secretary David Blunkett, who piloted the landmark anti-terrorism legislation through parliament following 9/11, told World Politics Review he was confident that it was possible to both defend against an unquantifiable terrorist threat while also avoiding a long-term erosion of civil liberties.

The legislation would not damage "the open, free society that we are endeavoring to protect and the terrorists are endeavoring to destroy," Blunkett insisted. "I say that because, although opinions move, the continuing threat exists and measures to defend against it can be proportionate enough to ensure you deal with that risk but you don't put at risk the normal tenets of democracy and the rule of law."

Blunkett might be right. But the government has painted itself into a corner. It cannot deprive the police of necessary powers to deter and prevent terrorist outrages which it knows are being planned. At the same time, so long as those expanded powers are turned against senior politicians who leak embarrassing information and children delivering the morning paper, it will have a tough battle convincing the growing body of agnostics -- inside and outside parliament -- that the police can be trusted to use them responsibly.

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=3097>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

London Daily Telegraph
December 27, 2008

Radical Islamists Linked to Al-Qaeda Set to Take Control of Somalia

By Mike Pflanz, in Nairobi

Hardline Islamists are poised to take control of large areas of southern Somalia, opening a possible new front in the war on terrorism.

Fears are growing that this lawless area, bordering Kenya and Ethiopia, could become a stronghold for terrorists with possible links to al-Qaeda.

Somalia's weak official government, the 14th in the last 17 years, depends entirely on the presence of Ethiopian troops, who are deployed in and around the capital, Mogadishu.

They invaded in December 2006, mounting an American-supported operation which overthrew an earlier Islamist regime, styling itself the Islamic Courts Union.

But Ethiopia has pledged to withdraw its troops at the end of December. When they leave, the official government is likely to fall - or be forced to evacuate Mogadishu.

An armed group styling itself Al-Shebab is likely to take over. Already, its fighters are believed to control more than 80 per cent of southern Somalia. These radical Islamists believe in imposing Sharia law and they recently approved the stoning of a 13-year-old girl.

Al Shebab, the fanatical armed wing which broke from the Islamic Courts Union which ran Somalia for the second half of 2006, now holds more than 80 per cent of the country – more territory than the Courts controlled during their reign.

Rashid Abdi, Somalia analyst for the Brussels-based International Crisis Group said: "They may be forced to moderate their radical line once they take over just to stay in power."

"But there are those who predict al Shebab turning into some kind of Frankenstein's monster taken over by, or at least sympathetic to, foreign elements who have ambitions outside Somalia, to spread radical Islam or mount terror attacks, in northeastern Kenya or eastern Ethiopia."

The group, listed as a terrorist organisation by Washington, has been accused of sheltering the al-Qaeda cell which bombed the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 and blew up an Israeli-owned hotel on the Kenyan coast in 2002.

Last month, the US embassy in Nairobi warned that it continues to receive indications of potential terrorist threats aimed at American, Western, and Kenyan interests in Kenya including threats of "suicide operations, bombings, kidnappings, attacks on civil aviation, and attacks on maritime vessels".

There are fears that al Shebab, whose stronghold is the Somali port of Kismayo just north of the border with Kenya, could launch an attack on coastal resorts popular with Western tourists over the Christmas holidays.

The United Nations office in Nairobi has warned staff of a "heightened level of alert along the coast".

Al Shebab's chief military commander, Muktar Robow, said earlier this year that he was ready "to take orders from Sheikh Osama bin Laden".

His forces were swelled by foreign fighters who answered a call to jihad when the Ethiopians invaded, in December 2006, to crush the Islamic Courts Union.

That intervention, heavily encouraged by Washington, is widely seen to have prompted the radicalisation of Somalia's Islamist movement and to have launched its Iraq-style insurgency which has killed thousands of civilians and forced 1.1 million people into desperate squatter camps. Two-thirds of the population of Mogadishu, the capital, have fled.

This has created a humanitarian disaster where 3.2 million people, half the population, now needs handouts, but where international aid staff cannot work and food shipments must be shepherded by warships to ward off pirates.

"I think it is finally starting to sink-in in Washington, two years too late, that sending in the Ethiopians as a proxy force to deal with the Islamists was just madness," said Andrew McGregor, terrorism editor at the Jamestown Foundation, a right-wing think tank in Washington.

There is some hope that once the Islamists seize control – and few doubt that they will – they will curb their insurgency, which largely targets the Ethiopians, and that Somalia might enjoy a level of stability as was seen under the Islamic Courts Union.

But there are concerns whether al Shebab, whose name means "the youth" and whose forces are largely illiterate and disaffected young men, can peacefully consolidate their power once they are in charge.

"Unless they can reach out and form some new alliances, which is not an easy thing to do among Somalia's clans, they will fail and we will see the start of yet another civil war," said Mr Abdi.

"I'm not optimistic. The future looks bleak and is likely to be bloody."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/somalia/3964681/Radical-Islamists-linked-to-al-Qaeda-set-to-take-control-of-Somalia.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

International Herald Tribune
Friday, January 2, 2009

Ethiopian Army Begins Pullout from Somalian Capital

By Mohamed Ibrahim and Jeffrey Gettleman

MOGADISHU, Somalia: Ethiopian Army trucks, packed with soldiers, tents, mattresses and other gear, began to pull out of Mogadishu, Somalia's battle zone of a capital, on Friday in the first signs of the expected Ethiopian withdrawal.

Many Somalis in their path fled, predicting that the Ethiopians would be attacked by mines and insurgents. Almost as soon as they began to move, the Ethiopians hit a roadside bomb.

Thousands of Ethiopian troops stormed into Mogadishu two years ago in an attempt to shore up Somalia's weak transitional government and wipe out an Islamist administration that the Ethiopians considered a terrorist threat.

But the Ethiopian occupation mostly failed. The Somali government is as divided and weak as ever.

Islamist insurgents have seized control of much of Somalia. Thousands of civilians have been killed in relentless combat between Islamist militants and the Ethiopians, with European Union officials accusing the Ethiopians of war crimes. Millions of Somalis are now on the brink of famine, the victims of war, displacement, drought and disease.

The Ethiopians were never popular in Somalia. But as people in Mogadishu watched the first convoy of 18 heavily loaded trucks chug down the bullet-pocked streets, many said they feared what would happen next.

"If the Ethiopians leave, there is a possibility of war among the Islamist fighters," said Jamal Ali, a student at Mogadishu University.

It is not clear whether the Ethiopian troops are leaving Somalia entirely or simply being redeployed from Mogadishu to other areas of the country.

"We have already started to implement our withdrawal plan," said Bereket Simon, a high-ranking Ethiopian official, according to Agence France-Presse. "It is a process and it will take some time."

About 3,000 African Union peacekeepers are in Somalia, trying to protect the few fortified enclaves that Somalia's transitional government controls.

Mohamed Ibrahim reported from Mogadishu and Jeffrey Gettleman from Nairobi.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2009/01/02/africa/somalia.php>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Christian Science Monitor

Why Al Qaeda isn't Gaining a Foothold in Cambodia

The post-Khmer Rouge nation is a portrait of tolerance for Muslims, but the US worries that this could change.

By David Montero - Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor
from the December 30, 2008 edition

CHROYAMONTREY, CAMBODIA - In this village, and others like it throughout Cambodia, Muslims and non-Muslims live side by side in harmony, their existences unmarred by the toxic cocktail of government repression, separatist ambitions, and growing radicalism characteristic of many neighboring countries. "I've been living with Muslim neighbors since I was young," says resident Ouk Ros. "When there's a marriage, we join together in the party."

Still, as money and influence from the Persian Gulf pours into Cambodia, many fear that pockets of the 400,000 strong Muslim community could fall into the orbit of a less-tolerant form of Islam. "There are some organizations here from the Middle East that are very radical and that are very intolerant, and they are trying very hard to change the attitude and the atmosphere of the Muslim population here," the outgoing US Ambassador, Joseph M. M. warned in August.

A unique confluence of modern history, geography, and government initiative have combined to foster tolerance in Cambodia, many observers here say.

In Thailand and the Philippines, Muslim communities are concentrated in separate – and often disadvantaged – territories, which are byproducts of ancient kingdoms to which Muslims once belonged. Separatists in Thailand's south have been fighting for greater autonomy since 2004 and in the Mindanao area of the Philippines since the 1970s.

But Cambodia's Muslims, sometimes referred to as Chams – a reference to an ancient empire of warriors, the Kingdom of Champa – have always lived dispersed throughout the country. "We don't have any separate lands, and we don't want any separate lands," says Osman Ysa, the author of two books on Cambodia's Cham population. "We consider this country as our own." To date, Muslims here have also eschewed radical politics, although not without exception. In 2003, authorities arrested a Cambodian citizen, as well as an Egyptian and two Thai nationals, all suspected of ties to Jemaah Islamiyah, an Al-Qaeda affiliate based in South Asia.

Cambodia's unique and dark modern history helps explain why the dominant form of Islam remains both peaceful and accommodating, Muslim leaders say. When the ultra-Communist Khmer Rouge seized power in 1975, they outlawed religion and set about decimating the Muslim population. By 1979, when the Khmer Rouge fell, about 500,000 Muslims had been killed – nearly 70 percent – according to one of Mr. Ysa's studies. As a result, the violence of Al Qaeda today reminds Muslim leaders of the Khmer Rouge of yesterday. "When Cambodia was controlled by Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge look liked Al Qaeda," says Sley Ry, the director of religious education at the Cambodian Islamic center, Cambodia's largest Islamic school, located near Phnom Penh. "We've already suffered a lot.... We are very disappointed by Al Qaeda because God tells: 'Don't kill people,' " adds Yousuf Bin Abetalip, an elder of Choy Changua, a village just outside of Phnom Penh, where about 300 Muslim families live. Buddhism is the state religion in this country of 14 million, but the country's constitution enshrines freedom of worship. Unlike in China, where the Communist government has been accused of limiting the freedom of Muslims to worship, the government of Prime Minister Hun Sen has built large mosques and provided free radio airtime for Muslim programming.

Beyond such overtures, Muslims enjoy real political power. About a dozen serve in top political offices. Mr. Sen even has his own advisor on Muslim affairs. But there are fears that Cambodia's moderate form of Islam could be contested. In recent months, ties between Cambodia and the Persian Gulf have grown as the Gulf States look to Cambodia as a potential buyer of oil and supplier of food. In September, the government of Kuwait pledged \$546 million in soft loans, while Qatar pledged \$200 million. Kuwait has also earmarked \$5 million to refurbish a mosque in Phnom Penh.

There are fears that the money could open the door to private individuals and foundations who seek to influence the Muslim community here. Whether founded or not, in January, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) opened its first office in Cambodia, citing the potential for terrorism.

"Cambodia is an important country to us for the potential of persons transiting Cambodia – using Cambodia as a spot for utilizing terrorism," FBI director Robert Mueller said, inaugurating the new office. In September, the prime minister announced a new law to more tightly control nongovernmental organizations. Sen's reasoning: "Terrorists might come to the Royal Government of Cambodia and hide themselves under the banners of nongovernment organizations."

Some critics contend the law is not aimed at terrorists, but nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that routinely criticize Sen's administration. "It's not only to control the terrorists groups, but also to control NGOs in general," says Thun Saray, the director of Adhoc, a human rights organization based in Phnom Penh.

As concern over terrorism grows, Muslims here, including Mr. Abetalip, say they will be the first to prevent it. "If there's any Cambodian people who want to follow Al Qaeda, we will straight away arrest them and bring them to the government."

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/1230/p04s01-wogn.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

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Pakistan Arrests Senior Taliban Aide

Ustad Yasar, a sometime spokesman for Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar, is captured in a rare instance of cross-border cooperation with Afghanistan.

By Laura King

Reporting from Islamabad, Pakistan — In an unusual instance of cross-border cooperation, Pakistani authorities arrested a ranking figure in Afghanistan's Taliban movement after receiving a tip that he had entered Pakistan, officials disclosed Saturday.

Few details were provided about the capture of Ustad Yasar, a senior aide to Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar. He had been released by Afghan officials in 2007 in a much-criticized prisoner exchange to secure the freedom of a kidnapped Italian journalist.

Pakistani officials said Yasar was picked up in the frontier city of Peshawar, the hub of the nation's volatile northwest and a growing center of the Islamist insurgency on the Pakistan side of the border. They did not say when the arrest occurred.

Western military officials say senior Taliban commanders as well as lower-level fighters move freely back and forth across the rugged, poorly marked Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier. But only rarely do Pakistani officials move to seize such figures.

Yasar's arrest was disclosed one day after a meeting in Kabul, the Afghan capital, at which senior Afghan, Pakistani and Western officials discussed ways to better coordinate efforts to fight Islamic insurgents. The capture provided a glimpse of the intertwined command structures of the Taliban movements in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

According to Pakistani news reports, Omar sent Yasar, his sometime spokesman, to Pakistan to try to mediate a dispute among Pakistani Taliban factions. These Taliban fighters have their own leaders and their own agenda of carrying out attacks against Pakistani troops, government installations and other targets. But they are also known to coordinate with Afghan counterparts.

Yasar was first captured in 2005 in Pakistan, where he had fled into the largely lawless rural border region with many other Afghan Taliban fighters. Turned over to Kabul authorities, Yasar was jailed in Afghanistan until March 2007, when he was freed in exchange for journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo -- a case that turned out to be a precursor to a string of similar kidnappings.

Mastrogiacomo, a veteran correspondent for the Italian daily La Repubblica, was seized along with his driver and an Afghan colleague in southern Afghanistan. His captors beheaded the driver in front of him, documenting the execution in a grisly video. After Mastrogiacomo made a videotaped plea for his own life, Afghan authorities freed Yasar and four other senior Taliban militants, as demanded by the kidnappers.

Mastrogiacomo was released unharmed, but the Afghan journalist, Ajmal Naqshbandi, was later found dead.

Aid agencies, foreign security officials and others warned at the time that the Afghan government's willingness to strike a deal with the kidnappers probably would spur similar abductions. These fears proved well-founded; the latter part of the year saw an upsurge in such incidents.

Last week, U.S. Ambassador William Wood told journalists in Afghanistan that there were about twice as many abductions in 2008 as in 2007, mostly involving Afghan nationals, but also a number of foreign aid workers and journalists.

Some of the kidnappings have been criminal cases involving large ransom demands, but others have apparently been politically motivated.

The Mastrogiacomo case clearly struck a chord with Western and Afghan officials. Of the five militants freed in the swap, three were eventually tracked down and killed by coalition troops. Yasar, meanwhile, was thought to have been under surveillance for some time.

Special correspondent Zulfiqar Ali in Peshawar contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-pakistan4-2009jan04,0,2663019.story>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Los Angeles Times
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Pg. 1
[News Analysis](#)

Bush Won Legal Fights in War On Terrorism

From surveillance to detention, he fended off challenges in court, leaving his successors some powerful tools.

By David G. Savage

WASHINGTON -- George W. Bush will end his presidency in retreat, forced to compromise on several fronts. Free-market economics have given way to massive government bailouts, and an assertive, unilateral foreign policy has yielded to one more attuned to world opinion. But in his defense of the war on terrorism, Bush has succeeded in beating back nearly all legal challenges -- including those to some of his most controversial policies.

Among them are a domestic surveillance program to intercept international phone calls, the rounding up of Muslim men for questioning after the Sept. 11 attacks, the holding of suspects in military custody in this country without filing charges, harsh interrogations -- some have called it torture -- of suspects arrested abroad, and the detention of foreign captives at a military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Because of the administration's successful defense of such policies, they not only will be a part of Bush's legacy but will be around for his successors. Even if Barack Obama rejects or sharply modifies Bush's positions, the precedents will remain for future chief executives.

Soon after Sept. 11, Bush said that as commander in chief he had the "inherent" power to act boldly in the nation's defense, regardless of whether Congress or the courts agreed. His claim has been much criticized. It also has not been accepted by Congress or endorsed by the Supreme Court. The justices have said the president must act according to the law, not in spite of it.

Nonetheless, Bush's anti-terrorism policies have not been blocked by the courts or Congress. When the Supreme Court struck down Bush's use of special military trials at Guantanamo on grounds that he had no legal basis for creating them, Congress passed the Military Commissions Act to authorize the trials.

When critics claimed the National Security Agency was violating the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act by intercepting calls without a warrant, Congress passed a law to authorize such wiretapping. The same measure also granted legal immunity to telephone companies that had cooperated with the administration.

Bush's tenure has been particularly frustrating for civil libertarians. They had believed that when the government violated the Constitution, someone could go to court and challenge it. But it's not clear that truism is still true.

Bush's lawyers have succeeded not by proving the constitutionality of the policies but by using procedural barriers to prevent lawsuits from going forward.

When the American Civil Liberties Union sued over the warrantless wiretapping, Bush's lawyers said the plaintiffs had no standing because they could not prove that their phones had been tapped. The government also refused to answer questions about whether the plaintiffs had been tapped, pleading national security.

When civil libertarians sued on behalf of men who said they had been wrongly abducted and tortured by the CIA, Bush's lawyers argued that the cases involved "state secrets." The courts agreed and dismissed the lawsuits.

"It has been a sad story," said Melissa Goodman, an ACLU lawyer. "The government has thrown up roadblocks. . . . We have never gotten judges to rule whether their acts have violated the Constitution or whether torture is unconstitutional."

Guantanamo may be the exception, albeit a partial one. The Supreme Court on three occasions struck down Bush's policies regarding the holding and trying of prisoners there. But the administration resisted making changes.

In June, the court ruled -- for the second time -- that prisoners had a right to plead for their freedom before a judge. A few hearings got underway in the fall. Last month, a judge ruled that five Bosnian men had been wrongly held as "enemy combatants," and on Dec. 16 three of them were flown home to Bosnia. They were the first prisoners set free from Guantanamo as a result of judge's order.

But the Guantanamo litigation has overshadowed the fact that Bush administration lawyers prevailed in blocking most other challenges.

When the government is sued, its lawyers can throw up an array of barriers. They can say the officials who carried out the policy have immunity from being sued. They can say the plaintiffs do not have standing to sue or lack enough evidence to show the policy is unconstitutional.

"This is a Catch-22," said Harold Hongju Koh, dean of Yale Law School. "They can say, 'You don't know we did it, so you can't sue.' Or, 'If you know we did it, you can't sue because it's a state secret.' The government makes these procedural arguments in every case, and it means you essentially never get a ruling on the merits."

If the people involved are foreigners, administration lawyers have said they have no rights under the Constitution.

Four British Muslims who had been shipped to Guantanamo and were freed years later sued former Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and other Pentagon officials. They alleged they had been tortured at Guantanamo and subjected to religious harassment. Last year, the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington threw out the lawsuit on the grounds that the men had no rights.

"Guantanamo detainees lack constitutional rights because they are aliens without property or presence in the United States," the court ruled.

But the lawsuit is not dead. The Supreme Court on Dec. 15 issued a one-line order telling the appeals court to rethink its ruling.

In several cases, federal judges declared Bush-era policies unconstitutional, but those rulings were thrown out by appeals courts. The Supreme Court refused to hear the challenges.

Perhaps civil libertarians made a mistake by relying on lawsuits to challenge government policies, said Richard Samp, counsel for the Washington Legal Foundation. "If you are trying to uncover wrongdoing, tort suits are not the way to do it," he said.

But others said innocent people wrongly abducted and punished had no other way to hold the government accountable. They cited the case of the German car salesman who was wrongly abducted by the CIA in a case of mistaken identity.

Khaled Masri, a German citizen of Lebanese descent, was on vacation in the Balkans in 2003 when he was pulled from a tour bus at a border crossing. He was questioned and his passport was taken. After several days, he was turned over to the CIA, which chained him and flew him to Afghanistan. Masri said he was beaten and tortured for weeks.

About six months later, U.S. officials confirmed he was not the wanted terrorist Khalid Masri, who had been living in Germany.

Masri was flown to Albania and dropped off on a country road at night. He made his way back to Germany. With the help of the ACLU, he filed a suit against the CIA and then-Director George J. Tenet, contending that he had been wrongly abducted and tortured. Administration lawyers blocked the suit from being heard because it could expose state secrets.

In 1953, the Supreme Court upheld the so-called state secrets privilege in a Cold War-era case involving the crash of a B-29. Three widows of the crash victims sued and sought the official accident report. The Air Force refused, saying military secrets were at issue. The high court ruled for the Air Force, but without examining the report.

Several years ago, the report was declassified. It revealed only that the plane had been poorly maintained.

The state secrets privilege found new life in recent years. These days, it does not just shield a secret document from being heard in court. Bush's lawyers have said that if a state secret may be exposed, the lawsuit must be dismissed.

A federal judge and a U.S. court of appeals threw out Masri's lawsuit without a hearing. Last year, when the ACLU appealed, Bush's lawyers said the Supreme Court should not allow such suits to expose secrets.

"The government has a compelling interest in protecting national security information, and the responsibility to do so falls on the president as head of the executive branch and as commander in chief," wrote Paul D. Clement, then the U.S. solicitor general.

In a one-line order, the high court dismissed Masri's suit.

ACLU lawyer Ben Wizner called it a sad day. "By denying justice to an innocent victim of this country's anti-terror polices, the court has provided the government with complete immunity for its shameful human rights and due process violations," he said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-bush-terror-law30-2008dec30,0,3230854.story>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)