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Washington Post
May 7, 2009

Obama's Budget Eliminates New Funding for Nuclear Detection

By Spencer S. Hsu
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Obama would eliminate new funding for advanced-generation equipment to detect nuclear weapons and radiological materials at U.S. borders and ports and around New York City in his 2010 budget, homeland security officials said.

The decisions, outlined in Homeland Security Department budget documents and briefings Thursday, mark a turn away from a priority of the administration of former president George W. Bush, who with former vice president Dick Cheney championed development of new technologies that could lead to a ring of domestic sensors of weapons of mass destruction.

But the research effort -- which former homeland security secretary Michael Chertoff described as a "mini-Manhattan project" -- has run into problems. Technical flaws and doubts about the integrity of scientific testing have delayed multi-billion dollar plans to buy advanced spectroscopic portal monitors, or ASPs, and automated cargo radiographic imaging systems, or CAARs, to scan for nuclear materials aboard cars, trucks, trains and cargo moving through air and land ports.

Congress has forced DHS's Domestic Nuclear Detection Office to hold off on new purchases, and Obama declined to request funds to buy equipment under DNDO beyond the \$153 million Bush obtained last year.

"In 2010, unspent funds will be drawn down as DHS transitions to a different model to fund the purchases of radiation detection equipment within the Department in future budgets," Obama budget documents stated. A DHS official, provided to brief reporters on condition of anonymity, said the decision is not a policy shift but that it was "prudent to take a pause" to work through technical problems and redirect DNDO's work to individual agencies that use the equipment.

Obama is also ending Securing the Cities, a three-year, \$90 million pilot program intended to test whether it is possible to secure an urban area -- in this case New York City -- against nuclear terrorism by draping it with an integrated system of handheld, aerial, truck-mounted and waterborne sensors.

"This is the end of the program as far as requesting new funds," the DHS official said.

Critics said that rather than investing in a "goal-line defense" against nuclear terrorists, it is better to spend money to secure nuclear materials at their source, coordinate a government-wide counter-proliferation strategy and to strengthen the operations of first-responders who would answer any alarm.

"My concern is . . . deploying systems that have not been proven technically to be effective, and before we have the means to make them operational," said Randall Larsen, executive director of the congressionally created Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism. "What do you do if the alarm goes off?" he said, adding, "What's the strategy behind what we're trying to do?"

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/07/AR2009050703518.html?hpid=topnews>

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Washington Post
May 8, 2009

Obama Administration Is Bringing Nuclear Arms Control Back

By Mary Beth Sheridan
Washington Post Staff Writer

In an Obama administration characterized by youth, they are a Cold War throwback, the aging arms-control experts who haggled with Soviet officials over nuclear weapons and testing.

Suddenly, arms control is back.

"Our leadership in the area of arms control and nonproliferation is of such profound global concern that that is at the top of the list" in U.S.-Russian relations, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said after meeting yesterday with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

In New York yesterday, senior U.S. and Russian negotiators sat down to start work on renewing the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the 1991 pact that cut in half the superpowers' stockpiles of nuclear warheads. The talks are the first step in the administration's effort to seek "a world without nuclear weapons," as President Obama vowed last month in Prague.

The negotiations come amid growing alarm about the development of nuclear weapons by North Korea and fears that Iran and other countries could follow suit. Luminaries of both political parties have called for new U.S. leadership in arms control and nonproliferation.

"The subject kind of fell off the table" in recent years, said former Republican secretary of state George P. Shultz, one of the most prominent of those voices. "Now it's back up in front, because people see the dangers."

The U.S. team negotiating the treaty renewal, led by arms-control expert Rose Gottemoeller, reflects the experience of a different era, when armies of bureaucrats from each side met in Geneva in an atmosphere bristling with suspicion.

"We've all been looking around and chuckling and saying, 'We're all over 50,'" said Gottemoeller, an assistant secretary of state. She describes herself as a "Sputnik baby" who became fascinated with the Soviet Union after the 1957 satellite launch that fueled the superpower arms race.

Obama has acknowledged that he may not live long enough to see a nuclear-free world, and has said that the United States will maintain a nuclear arsenal "as long as these weapons exist." But in addition to launching talks on the U.S.-Russian strategic-arms treaty, known as START, Obama has pledged to make progress on three other fronts: pushing for Senate ratification of an international treaty banning nuclear testing; reaching an agreement on halting production of weapons-grade uranium and plutonium; and strengthening the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty, the grand global bargain in which most nations pledged not to seek nuclear arms.

The administration of President George W. Bush was wary of complex arms-control agreements, viewing them as unreliable and crimping U.S. flexibility. The administration pulled out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and reduced the U.S. contribution toward international monitoring of possible nuclear tests. It did, however, reach a bare-bones deal with Russia in 2002, known as the Moscow Treaty, to further reduce deployed strategic nuclear warheads.

John R. Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control in Bush's first term, said the Obama policies mark a philosophical shift. To Bush officials, "arms-control negotiations reflected an adversarial approach from the Cold War days" that did not make sense in dealing with modern-day Russia, he said. The Bush administration resisted adding verification measures to the 2002 agreement.

But Russian leaders were unhappy about that approach. They also worried about American plans to place in Eastern Europe elements of a missile-defense system aimed at Iran.

Gottemoeller, 56, who spent recent years in Moscow researching arms control, said the new talks could help rebuild confidence. "It will put us in a place where we can really, with the Russians, join arms and work very hard to solve the Iranian and North Korean problems," she said. "We can already see the possibilities for cooperation on some of these big nonproliferation problems are there, and will expand."

Experts say there could be a further benefit: increased U.S. leverage with nonnuclear countries that have criticized the major nuclear powers for not moving more rapidly to disarm, as they are required to do under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The United States and Russia maintain more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons.

Skeptics question whether Russia and China can be persuaded to approve harsher sanctions against Iran, which those countries consider a strategic and economic partner. Iran says its rapidly expanding nuclear program is aimed only at producing energy.

"This is a sucker move by us," Bolton said, adding that "it's not in [the Russians'] interest to help us on Iran."

Obama's election coincides with growing fears that nuclear proliferation could be at a tipping point. Alarmed by that possibility, a group of prominent former officials -- including Republicans Shultz and Henry A. Kissinger and Democrats William J. Perry and Sam Nunn -- have been urging the nuclear powers to move more aggressively on actions that could eventually rid the world of such weapons.

The State Department is now scrambling to expand its team of arms-control specialists, depleted by retirements and the departure of several senior officials who felt politically sidelined.

"I'm seeking arms-control and nonproliferation experts to come back into the department," Clinton told senators in her confirmation hearing, saying those capabilities had been "significantly degraded" in recent years.

The 1991 treaty, which expires in December, limited the number of strategic bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles and the quantity of nuclear bombs or warheads they could carry. It established elaborate verification measures, including on-site inspections.

One of the trickiest aspects of the negotiations will be figuring out how to count each side's weapons, including those in storage. Depending on which treaty you look at, the United States has either 5,500 strategic nuclear warheads or 2,200, with the lower number reflecting only those deployed. Both sides have committed to further reduce their stockpiles in the new treaty.

Another difficult subject is how to verify the number of warheads. While each side wants a reliable method to check on the other, both countries are wary of spies poking around at their sensitive military sites. "One of the major goals in this negotiation is to be more precise about the number of warheads on missiles," Gottemoeller said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/07/AR2009050704070.html>

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New York Times

May 8, 2009

Delegates Take Key Step in Nuclear Treaty Review

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS (AP) -- Delegates preparing for a major conference next year to review the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty have agreed on an agenda, and some said the change in President Barack Obama's tone and emphasis was a key factor.

Obama's pledge last month to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons -- a major reversal from former President George W. Bush's policy -- has spurred hope that it and new U.S.-Russian cooperation will end a long deadlock on global disarmament efforts.

"We would like to think that this agreement on the agenda reflects an early political dividend to the changed atmosphere on disarmament efforts thanks to the new outlook from the U.S. administration," Indonesia's U.N. Ambassador Marty Natalegawa said.

Other delegates, speaking privately, agreed that the change in Obama's tone was a key factor.

The last review conference in 2005 was unable to agree on an agenda until nearly three weeks after it started, "and this was a major factor in the failure of the meeting," said John Duncan, Britain's ambassador for multilateral arms control and disarmament.

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, known as the NPT, requires signatory nations not to pursue nuclear weapons in exchange for a commitment by the five nuclear powers -- the U.S., Russia, Britain, France and China -- to move toward nuclear disarmament. The nonweapons states are guaranteed access to peaceful nuclear technology to produce nuclear power.

Rose Gottemoeller, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for verification, compliance and implementation, called the early adoption of the agenda "good news."

"Having an agenda in place allows us to move forward on important substantive issues related to President Obama's goal of strengthening this vital nonproliferation instrument," she said in a statement to The Associated Press.

The agenda -- which will be formally adopted at the start of next year's conference -- covers the treaty's three pillars: disarmament, nonproliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

It includes contentious issues such as the pace of disarmament by the five nuclear powers, assurances by the nuclear weapon states that they won't use their atomic weapons against non-nuclear states, and getting all countries to join the treaty.

Britain's Duncan cautioned that "this is only the first step on what will be a challenging discussion."

The U.S. is encouraging the three holdouts -- India, Pakistan and Israel -- to join, and North Korea to come back. India, Pakistan and North Korea possess nuclear weapons, and Israel is widely believed to have them.

Also on the agenda is the establishment of a nuclear-weapons free zone in the Middle East, which would require Israel's compliance.

The preparatory meeting ends May 15.

http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2009/05/08/world/AP-UN-UN-Nuclear-Disarmament.html?_r=2

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Japan Times
May 8, 2009

U.S. Urged to Increase Japan Nuclear Talks

WASHINGTON (Kyodo) The United States should launch a full dialogue on nuclear issues with Japan, parallel to Washington's efforts to hammer out a new atomic arms limitation deal with Moscow, according to a congressional report released Wednesday.

The report by the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture calls on the U.S. to lead the way in helping to achieve nuclear disarmament, but acknowledges the country will need to maintain its nuclear deterrence capability for years to come.

The commission, chaired by former Defense Secretary William Perry, unveiled the report to put forward recommendations to the administration of President Barack Obama on the future shape of U.S. nuclear weapons policy.

The 158-page report, titled "America's Strategic Posture," singles out the need for the Obama administration to "establish a more extensive dialogue" with Japan on nuclear issues.

The recommendation reflects the commission's belief that the U.S. must closely consult with its allies as it negotiates a new nuclear accord with Russia that would replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, due to expire in December.

Noting that bilateral talks on nuclear issues have been "limited only by the desires of the Japanese government," the report says, "Such a dialogue with Japan would also increase the credibility of extended deterrence."

In addition to dialogue with Japan, the report also calls for close consultations with major regional powers, including China and India.

"There must also be robust dialogues with other parties interested in strategic stability, including especially Beijing and Delhi," it says.

The report pins high hopes on the U.S. to contribute to a global nuclear disarmament drive by successfully concluding a new nuclear deal with Russia this year and taking a leadership role at a review conference of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty next year.

While taking note of Obama's goal of creating a nuclear-free world, the report admits there is no other choice but to maintain U.S. nuclear deterrence capability for years to come.

"It is clear that the goal of zero nuclear weapons is extremely difficult to attain and would require a fundamental transformation of the world political order," it says.

"So long as nuclear dangers remain, (the United States) must have a strong deterrent that is effective in meeting its security needs and those of its allies," it says.

The report pointedly recommends that Washington continue to provide nuclear deterrence to its allies, including Japan and South Korea, even if it pursues disarmament. "All allies depending on the U.S. nuclear umbrella should be assured that any changes in its forces do not imply a weakening of the U.S. extended nuclear deterrence guarantees," it says.

"Extended deterrence" refers to the theory that the U.S. would retaliate in the event its allies are attacked.

Alluding to Japan and other nations, the report also cautions that the U.S. must not allow its friends and allies to pursue nuclear armaments.

"A quick survey of the potential nuclear candidates in Northeast Asia and the Middle East brings home the point that many potential proliferation candidates are friends and even allies of the United States," it says.

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20090508a6.html>

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RIA Novosti
10 May 2009

Russia to Link Missile Defense in Europe with Nuclear Arms Treaty

MOSCOW (RIA Novosti) - Russia will link U.S. plans for a missile shield in Europe with the issues of strategic offensive armaments in relations with the United States, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said on Sunday.

"One needn't be an expert to understand: if one party wants or would have an umbrella against all kinds of threats, this party would develop an illusion that it is allowed to do anything and then the aggressiveness of its actions will increase numerously, and the threat of global confrontation will reach a very dangerous level," Putin said in an interview with Japanese media on the eve of his visit to Japan.

Moscow has been at loggerheads with Washington over plans to deploy a missile defense system in Central Europe. The United States has signed agreements with the Czech Republic on hosting a radar station and with Poland on the deployment of 10 interceptor missiles by 2013.

Russia says the missile shield would be a threat to its national security while the United States has argued it is necessary to guard against the threat of missile attacks from states such as Iran.

Considering that the current nuclear arms reduction treaty expires this year, Moscow is ready to return to this issue and agree on a new pact, Putin said.

Russia's Foreign Ministry earlier said that the first round of negotiations between Russia and the U.S. on a new nuclear arms reduction treaty would be held in Moscow on May 18-20.

The Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (START 1), signed in 1991, obliges Russia and the U.S. to reduce nuclear warheads to 6,000 and their delivery vehicles to 1,600 each. The treaty expires on December 5 this year.

In 2002, a follow-up agreement on strategic offensive arms reduction was concluded in Moscow. The agreement, known as the Moscow Treaty, envisioned cuts to 1,700-2,200 warheads by December 2012.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama agreed during their London meeting in early April on an immediate start to talks on a new strategic arms reduction treaty.

Russia and the United States possess 90% of the world's nuclear weapons.

Moscow, which proposed a new arms reduction agreement with Washington in 2005, expects the United States to agree on a deal that would restrict not only the numbers of nuclear warheads but also place limits on all existing kinds of delivery vehicles.

Moscow also insists on the effective use of control mechanisms and procedures, "which the previous administration ignored categorically," according to Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090510/121530185.html>

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Yonhap News
8 May 2009

N. Korea Blasts Obama, Vows to Bolster Nuclear Force

By Kim Hyun

SEOUL (Yonhap) -- North Korea blasted the Barack Obama administration for being "hostile" toward it and vowed to bolster its nuclear deterrent, as a U.S. envoy on Pyongyang was due in Seoul on Friday.

"The study of the policy pursued by the Obama administration for the past 100 days since its emergence made it clear that the U.S. hostile policy toward the DPRK remains unchanged," the country's foreign ministry spokesman told the official Korean Central News Agency.

The unidentified spokesman cited past remarks by Obama, who called North Korea's April 5 rocket launch "a challenge" and "provocation" and pushed for "proper punishment" by the U.N. Security Council for it. He also blasted U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for dubbing North Korea as a "tyrannical" and "rogue regime."

Pyongyang renewed its criticism of the Obama administration as Stephen Bosworth, U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, was to arrive in Seoul in the afternoon for discussions on ways to reactivate stalled denuclearization talks.

In Beijing, the first stop in his nine-day tour of Northeast Asia and Russia, Bosworth reaffirmed that Washington is willing to engage in both multilateral and bilateral talks with Pyongyang to break the stalemate.

"The United States reiterates its desire to engage both multilaterally and bilaterally with North Korea and we believe very strongly that the solution to the tensions and problems of the area now lies best in dialogue and negotiation," he told reporters after meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei on Thursday night.

North Korea said there is no use in trying to talk with the U.S. and that it will bolster its nuclear force as long as Washington does not shift from its "hostile" policy.

"Nothing would be expected from the U.S. which remains unchanged in its hostility toward its dialogue partner," the spokesman said.

"The measures taken by the DPRK (North Korea) recently to bolster its national defense capability are aimed not to draw attention of someone and have dialogue with it," he said. "The DPRK will bolster its nuclear deterrent as it has already clarified."

North Korea warned last week it will conduct a second nuclear test as well as inter-continental ballistic missile tests unless the U.N. Security Council apologizes for rebuking its April rocket launch.

Pyongyang says the launch has successfully orbited a peaceful satellite. South Korea, the U.S. and Japan view it as a disguised long-range missile test.

North Korea appeared to have timed its latest message with Bosworth's visit, said Yang Moo-jin, a professor with the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul.

"North Korea is telling Bosworth, 'We won't move the slightest bit as long as the U.S. keeps its current policy. If you want to talk with us, show us some change,'" Yang said.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2009/05/08/7/0401000000AEN20090508003900315F.HTML>

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Yonhap News
8 May 2009

Second Nuke Test by N. Korea would lead to 'Consequences': Bosworth

By Lee Chi-dong

SEOUL (Yonhap) -- The U.S. point man on North Korea, Stephen Bosworth, on Friday called on the communist state not to press ahead with a second nuclear test, stressing "the door to dialogue is always open."

"If the North Koreans decide to carry out a second nuclear test, we will deal with the consequences of that, and there will be consequences," Bosworth told reporters after talks with South Korean Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan on ways to resume the six-way talks on Pyongyang's nuclear program. The negotiations also involve China, Russia, and Japan.

"For the United States and I believe all of the five parties, the door to dialogue is always open," he said. "It is in (North Korea's) interest to continue dialogue and negotiation on a multilateral basis."

He stressed that the U.S. government's policy on North Korea is not hostile.

"We would not interpret our policy as being hostile," he said. "President (Barack) Obama has stressed on numerous occasions that the door to dialogue remains open and that we remain committed to resolving the problems we face through negotiations and dialogue."

A North Korean foreign ministry spokesman, just hours before Bosworth's arrival here, charged that the Obama administration retains U.S. hostile policy toward the North and said it will bolster its nuclear deterrent.

North Korea announced last month that it will conduct another nuclear test, following its first in 2006, unless the U.N. Security Council offers an apology for its condemnation of the North's rocket launch on April 5.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2009/05/08/75/0401000000AEN20090508007500315F.HTML>

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution

May 10, 2009

Pakistan Perched on Tipping Point

By Bill Steiden, Tim Ellerbee, Jim Galloway

A place of green mountains and clear streams, the Swat valley was once known as the Switzerland of Pakistan. But last week, the Taliban seized control of the region's main town, Mingora, putting it at the center of a crisis that threatens the stability of the West's main ally in the world's most fractious region.

Up to half a million refugees are fleeing the area as the military launches an offensive to oust the militants — a battle that Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on Saturday called "a war of the country's survival."

The future of Pakistan, the war in neighboring Afghanistan and the security of the only nuclear arsenal controlled by an Islamic nation could hang in the balance.

Pakistan, Afghanistan

S. Rashid Naim, a senior political science lecturer at Georgia State University, explained what's at stake as Islamic radicals contend for control of Pakistan with the religiously moderate governing class:

"In the worst-case scenario, Pakistan could descend into a full-scale civil war. Such a development would be a catastrophe not only for the people of Pakistan but also for U.S. goals in the region. The war in Afghanistan would, in effect, have spread to Pakistan and it would draw the U.S. and its allies into a wider conflict with unpredictable consequences. ... More U.S. troops and treasure would have to be expended in a long drawn-out conflict which might go on for decades. Our experience in Iraq at the height of the civil conflict there would be a tea party compared to what would await us if we got involved in a Pakistani civil war."

Nuclear arsenal

As Kamran Bokhari of the global intelligence firm Stratfor told the Toronto Star last week, "Pakistan is the only country that has both nukes and jihad."

Its weapons are the product of another conflict: a long-standing dispute with India. Created as an Islamic majority state when mostly Hindu India gained independence in 1947, Pakistan has repeatedly engaged in armed clashes with its neighbor over territorial disputes. By 1998, both had developed and tested nuclear weapons.

Specifics of Pakistan's nukes are secret, but it's estimated there are upward of 100. Pakistan says it stores the weapons disassembled in secure sites around the country, and separate from the missiles needed to deliver them. But presumably, to be an effective deterrent, they can be quickly assembled and ready for launch.

The Pakistani government and President Barack Obama say concern over the security of the nuclear weapons is overblown, and the country's still-powerful army gives top priority to guarding them.

"I'm confident that we can make sure that (they are) secure," Obama told reporters last week, adding the army "recognizes the hazards of those weapons falling into the wrong hands."

Reason to worry

Former U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn, a Georgia Democrat who chaired the powerful Armed Services Committee, has devoted himself since leaving office to leading the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a group that seeks to decrease the threats posed by nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Though he was an informal adviser to Obama during the

presidential campaign, he doesn't share the president's sense of assurance about the security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

"I wish that I had the confidence that we really know," he said in an interview. "And I'm glad that some of our top officials believe that the Pakistan military is dedicated to protecting those weapons. And I have no doubt that the top levels of the Pakistan military are."

But, he said, "We're not doing our own on-the-ground assessment. We don't have access. So what you're hearing in the statements of confidence is that top U.S. officials are confident that top Pakistani officials fully intend to protect their nuclear weapons. The real question is, the generals aren't guarding those weapons. The privates are — the young people are. And Pakistan has become more radicalized. Weapons security depends on personnel security. And that's one that's a big question mark, as the country becomes more subject to revolutionary-type zealots."

Nunn said he is worried that, even if the weapons are secure, the material used to make them — highly enriched uranium — is not.

What to do

Nunn said he assumes Pakistan has no intention of giving up its nuclear weapons, so he believes the top priority should be to persuade the Pakistanis to cooperate in "blending down" their supply of bomb-making materials so that it is no longer weapons-grade.

"Highly enriched uranium is what terrorists would make a weapon out of, and it's the easiest material to work with," he said.

For Naim, the focus is on getting Pakistan's government to take measures to save itself by restoring its credibility with its people. Most immediately important, he says, are eliminating endemic government corruption and restoring the country's independent judiciary — crippled under past President Pervez Musharraf, whose removal of the Supreme Court's chief jurist was only recently reversed by current President Asif Ali Zardari.

"The two main assets that the Taliban have in their campaign against the Pakistani government is the perception that they are committed to the rule of law, their excesses aside, and that they are not corrupt," Naim said.

The Pakistani people, he said, "understand that a civil war is a no-win situation for all sides. A combination of statesmanship from their leaders and support from their friends around the world will allow the situation to be dealt with and an international catastrophe with unpredictable outcomes avoided."

Compiled by Sunday A-section Editor Bill Steiden, External Content Editor Tim Ellerbee and staff writer Jim Galloway. The AP contributed to this article.

<http://www.ajc.com/services/content/printedition/2009/05/10/pakistan05101.html>

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London Guardian

11 May 2009

Taliban Try to Spread Fighting in Pakistani Tribal Belt

Declan Walsh in Peshawar

Taliban militants backed by al-Qaida trainers are stepping up a campaign of violent destabilisation across Pakistan's tribal belt to divert forces from the battle in the Swat valley, a senior Pakistani commander said today.

"They are trying [to spread the fighting] but it's not significant enough for us to divert our attention," said Major General Tariq Khan, commander of the 50,000-strong Frontier Corps, speaking to the Guardian at his Peshawar headquarters.

The Taliban have launched suicide attacks and heavy assaults on security installations in the tribal belt along the Afghan border in recent days. On Sunday 200 militants swarmed an outpost in Mohmand tribal agency, south-east of Swat, triggering a gun battle that killed 25 militants and wounded 11 Frontier Corps soldiers, Khan said.

Moments later a phone call brought news of another attack: a suicide bomber had just rammed his car into a checkpost at Dara Adam Khel, a tribal town 15 miles away. Two Frontier Corps troops and six civilians, one a six-year-old girl, were killed, police said.

The Taliban were being trained by foreign mercenaries linked to al-Qaida, Khan said. "They are experts in IEDs [roadside bombs], sniper fire and explosives. Mostly Tajiks and Uzbeks, basically. They get paid for their expertise," he said.

Intelligence reports from the Mohmand gun battle indicated the presence of 100 Mehsud and Wazir fighters from South Waziristan, where Baitullah Mehsud holds sway, Khan said, demonstrating the reach of the Taliban warlord.

"He has access to people, funds and resources, and [the local groups] want him to dish it out. That's his importance," said Khan.

Mehsud territory in South Waziristan has become a stronghold of foreign fighters, particularly ethnic Uzbeks with the al-Qaida-affiliated Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, (IMU), led by the radical cleric Tahir Yuldashev.

Arab fighters, in contrast, are concentrated in an area controlled by a rival commander, Maulvi Nazir Ahmed, Pakistani intelligence officials have told the Guardian.

Both groups are the focus of American attention. On Sunday General David Petraeus, head of US Central Command, said the al-Qaida leadership was located in Pakistan. Today the New York Times reported that the US had carried out 16 drone strikes this year and 36 in 2008, the bulk of them in North and South Waziristan.

The latest such strike, on Saturday night, hit Mehsud's network, killing at least six people.

The army is likely to turn its attention to Mehsud in South Waziristan after the Swat operation, Khan hinted. "I personally feel we will have to deal with North and South Waziristan if we want to have a lasting effect on the militants," he said.

Khan, a well regarded commander with several years' experience leading the fight in the tribal areas, spoke to the Guardian at Bala Hissar, a redbrick 18th-century British fort that serves as the Frontier Corps headquarters.

For the last two weeks he has commanded operations in Buner, 60 miles north-west of Islamabad, where a Taliban advance sparked American alarm and triggered a concerted Pakistani counteroffensive.

"We were caught by surprise," he admitted, describing how he shifted forces from the tribal belt and conducted rushed reconnaissance of an area where he never imagined having to fight.

Khan described how the Taliban operate in groups of between 30 and 40 men, split into groups of five, each with a radio set. As they creep up on security forces' positions, firing rocket propelled grenades, they try to distract soldiers with surrender negotiations until they swarm the position "like a pack of wolves", he said.

Pakistan's interior minister claimed today that more than 700 fighters had been killed in Swat, Buner and Dir. The figure could not be independently confirmed.

The operations have also sparked a humanitarian crisis. The United Nations said that more than 360,000 people had registered for help in Mardan and Swabi districts, south of Swat, and more were expected.

The Frontier Corps is playing a secondary role in Swat, where the fighting is commanded by the regular army. In the main town, Mingora, the Taliban have dug into defensive positions and mined bridges and roads.

But Khan said he did not expect to see a major street battle in the town.

"I don't think the Taliban are going to fight once they see a consolidated effort against them. Their effort at getting into Mingora is to melt into the crowd, to move out with the exodus of refugees," he said.

"There may be some odd resistance on the outer fringes of the city at a later stage but I don't expect it to be a hardcore urban battle. They will vanish into society."

He predicted that a hard core of fighters would retreat into remote valleys north of Mingora, such as Piochar and Shamozaï, and try to sue for peace. "They will get into the caves, try and find a means to a negotiated settlement. That's their best bet at the moment. I don't think they are capable of giving a hardcore fight."

Some people registering for help in Mardan and Swabi arrive with tales of heavy collateral damage caused by Frontier Corps heavy artillery. Khan said complaints were "exaggerated".

"Yes there was a lot of heavy bombing of Ambela," he said, referring to a strategic pass where fighting was concentrated, "but remember the houses were evacuated by the people and every house was boobytrapped. I couldn't expose my troops to that."

But he admitted some mistakes had been made, including the shooting of a local teacher in his car. "We are very, very sorry we had to resort to shooting people who were innocent. It always sullies the operation when you have these innocent deaths. But they can't be helped at times."

During the fighting the Taliban deployed 31 sets of suicide attackers – 21 in trucks, four on motorcycles and seven people with explosives strapped around them – but most were killed thanks to heat-seeking sensors on tanks, he said.

The Frontier Corps suffered two fatalities from the suicide attacks, Khan said, when they were crushed by a building adjacent to a blast. "Concussion killed these two men; otherwise we've been lucky," he said.

Combat in Buner is dying down as it increases in Swat, Khan said. Between 200 and 300 Taliban fighters remained, mostly in the villages of Pir Baba and Sultanwas, and they would be cleared out "today or tomorrow".

It would take another four days to clear a heavily mined mountain road leading back to Swat, a route that fleeing Taliban forces were trying to take. The Frontier Corps has sealed seven mountain passes but said it was impossible to completely close off Swat, he said.

Previous Pakistani campaigns against the Taliban have faltered after political settlements. Khan said he did not favour further negotiation but admitted that "there are different opinions on the matter".

The Frontier Corps is currently undergoing training by about 25 British and American military trainers, mostly in communications, sniper techniques and artillery fire.

But the trained troops have not yet been redeployed, and Khan warned that conventional western techniques were sometimes ineffective against the Taliban.

"We have to be very careful when training these people. If you try to impose command and control through a drill system ... you are going to smash the essence of tribal warfare," he said.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/may/11/taliban-pakistan-swat-tribal-belt>

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Hindu – India

11 May 2009

'Shaky Pak Seen as a Target of al-Qaeda Plots'

Washington (IANS): As Taliban militants push deeper into Pakistan, foreign operatives of al-Qaeda are seizing on the turmoil to sow chaos in Pakistan, the *New York Times* reported on Monday.

The operatives which had earlier focussed on plotting attacks against the West are now seeking to strengthen the hand of the militant Islamist groups in Pakistan, said the influential U.S. daily citing American and Pakistani intelligence officials.

One indication came on April 19, when a truck parked inside an al-Qaeda compound in South Waziristan, in Pakistan's tribal areas, erupted in a fireball when it was struck by a CIA missile, it said.

The *Times* cited American intelligence officials as saying that the truck had been loaded with high explosives, apparently to be used as a bomb, and that while its ultimate target remains unclear, the bomb would have been more devastating than the suicide bombing that killed more than 50 people at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad last September.

Al-Qaeda's leaders — a predominantly Arab group of Egyptians, Saudis and Yemenis, as well as other nationalities like Uzbeks — for years have nurtured ties to Pakistani militant groups like the Taliban operating in the mountains of Pakistan.

The foreign operatives have historically set their sights on targets loftier than those selected by the local militant groups, aiming for spectacular attacks against the West, but they may see new opportunity in the recent violence, the *Times* said.

Intelligence officials cited by the daily said the Taliban advances in Swat and Buner, which are closer to Islamabad than to the tribal areas, have already helped al-Qaeda in its recruiting efforts.

"They smell blood, and they are intoxicated by the idea of a jihadist takeover in Pakistan," Bruce O. Riedel, a former analyst for the CIA who recently led the Obama administration's policy review of Pakistan and Afghanistan, was quoted as saying.

It remains unlikely that Islamic militants could seize power in Pakistan, given the strength of Pakistan's military, according to American intelligence analysts cited by the Times.

But the daily said a senior American intelligence official expressed concern that recent successes by the Taliban in extending territorial gains could foreshadow the creation of "mini-Afghanistans" around Pakistan that would allow militants even more freedom to plot attacks.

<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/000200905111111.htm>

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Wall Street Journal

11 May 2009

Al Qaeda's Global Base Is Pakistan, Says Petraeus

By YOCHI J. DREAZEN

WASHINGTON -- Senior leaders of al Qaeda are using sanctuaries in Pakistan's lawless frontier regions to plan new terror attacks and funnel money, manpower and guidance to affiliates around the world, according to a top American military commander.

Gen. David Petraeus, who oversees the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, said in an interview that Pakistan has become the nerve center of al Qaeda's global operations, allowing the terror group to re-establish its organizational structure and build stronger ties to al Qaeda offshoots in Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, North Africa and parts of Europe.

The comments underscore a growing U.S. belief that Pakistan has displaced Afghanistan as al Qaeda's main stronghold. "It is the headquarters of the al Qaeda senior leadership," said the general, who took the helm of the military's Central Command last fall.

In the interview, Gen. Petraeus also warned of difficult months ahead in Afghanistan, saying Taliban militants are moving weapons and forces into areas where the U.S. is adding troops, planning a "surge" of their own to counter the U.S. plan.

The commander said the U.S. had intelligence showing that the Taliban were deploying new fighters to southern Afghanistan, appointing new local commanders, and repositioning weapons and other supplies.

"We have every expectation that the Taliban will fight to retain the sanctuaries and safe havens that they've been able to establish," he said.

Senior Obama administration officials have spoken publicly for weeks about the threat posed by Pakistan. In late March, President Barack Obama said that Pakistan's lawless border region had "become the most dangerous place in the world" for Americans.

Pakistani officials have acknowledged that their country is facing a growing threat from al Qaeda, the Taliban and other armed Islamist groups. Appearing at the White House on Wednesday with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari pledged to "stand with our brother Karzai and the people of Afghanistan against this common threat, this menace, which I have called a cancer."

Pakistani Ambassador Hussein Haqqani said in an email that his government is "determined to eliminate Al Qaeda and the terrorist Taliban." He added, "We have launched a major offensive against the Taliban and look forward to acting on any actionable intelligence shared with us by our American partners."

U.S. officials once believed that years of strikes had broken al Qaeda's leadership into smaller, less effective splinter groups. But in the interview, Gen. Petraeus said U.S. intelligence information suggested that al Qaeda has re-emerged as a centrally directed organization capable of helping to plan attacks in other countries. "There is a degree of hierarchy, there is a degree of interconnection, and there is certainly a flow of people, money, expertise, explosives and knowledge," he said.

Gen. Petraeus painted a picture of a globalized al Qaeda that maintains extensive logistical and communications links to terror groups in Morocco, Somalia and other countries. He said militants and supplies pass through southern Iran, helped by Sunni Arab "facilitators" in the predominantly Shiite Persian country.

A ring of Tunisian suicide bombers who were recently apprehended in Iraq appear to have received their directions from al Qaeda figures in Pakistan as well, he said. "There's absolutely no question about these links," he said.

American intelligence agencies have used drones to fire missiles at dozens of militant targets inside Pakistan in recent months, killing several top al Qaeda figures. But U.S. officials acknowledge that al Qaeda's senior leadership has survived those attacks.

Al Qaeda's resurgence in Pakistan is posing a policy dilemma for the Obama administration and senior U.S. commanders like Gen. Petraeus. Pakistan's government won't allow U.S. military personnel into the country. That is forcing the U.S. either to strike targets from a distance, which doesn't always work, or to rely on Pakistan's own security personnel, who have so far been largely unwilling to venture into al Qaeda's remote sanctuaries.

The Pentagon has looked at possible changes in Afghanistan amid concern over the course of the conflict -- some of which have met resistance from current military leaders including Gen. Petraeus. A task force formed by Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is conducting a broad review, according to a copy of its agenda. Defense Secretary Robert Gates is expected to appoint an additional general to handle day-to-day operations there, senior defense officials say. A spokesman for Gen. Petraeus has declined to comment.

Gen. Petraeus spent the past week in Washington as part of the Obama administration's summit with presidents Karzai and Zardari. He said the Pakistani Taliban appear to have overreached by sending fighters into the Buner District, just 60 miles from the capital. Echoing recent comments from top Obama administration officials, he said Pakistan's government, military and people seemed to have finally accepted that the Taliban pose a threat to their country's future and must be dealt with.

"There's a sense of collective determination to respond forcefully," he said. "The Taliban challenged the very writ of the Pakistani government, and that's being taken very seriously." Still, he said it was too soon to gauge the full magnitude or duration of the Pakistani response.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124182556238902393.html>

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Washington Times

May 11, 2009

Taliban a Threat to Pakistan's 'Existence'

Sean Lengell

The head of the U.S. Central Command said Sunday that the Taliban's increasing foothold in the mountains of Pakistan "threatens the very existence" of the country, but he said he is confident that the nation's military will protect its nuclear arsenal and that Taliban brutality has provoked Pakistanis to unite against the militia.

"Certainly the next few weeks will be very important in this effort to roll back, if you will, this existential threat, a true threat to Pakistan's very existence that has been posed by the Pakistani Taliban," Gen. David H. Petraeus said on "Fox News Sunday."

But Gen. Petraeus added that reports of brutality and repression by the Taliban in northwestern Pakistan have helped rally public support for the country's military offensive into the region to fight the militant organization - a scenario that could turn the tide in Pakistan's battle to crush the group.

"The actions of the Pakistani Taliban ... have galvanized all of Pakistan - not just the president and the prime minister but also even the opposition leaders, virtually all the elements of the political spectrum and the people," the general said. "So there is a degree of unanimity that there must be swift and effective action taken against the Taliban in Pakistan."

Gen. Petraeus said U.S. military and security analysts don't think Pakistan's nuclear weapons are in danger of falling into the hands of the Taliban.

"We have confidence in their security procedures and elements and believe that the security of those [nuclear] sites is adequate," he said.

Several signs in the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater Sunday were less optimistic. Two members of Congress said they did not think Afghan President Hamid Karzai was being fully cooperative with the U.S.

The U.S. national security adviser and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari both said they didn't know where Taliban ally Osama bin Laden can be found, and U.S. officials rebuffed Mr. Karzai's request for an end to bombing raids in his country.

National Security Adviser James L. Jones said the U.S. will not end air strikes in Afghanistan, as demanded by Mr. Karzai after two villages were hit by U.S. warplanes last week, killing scores of civilians, perhaps as many as 130. The U.S. has accused the Taliban militia of using civilians as human shields.

"I think that we're going to take a look at trying to make sure that we correct those things we can correct, but certainly to tie the hands of our commanders and say we're not going to conduct air strikes, it would be imprudent," Mr. Jones said on ABC's "This Week" program.

Some lawmakers on Capitol Hill also expressed impatience Sunday with the Afghan leader. Sen. Bob Corker, a Tennessee Republican who met with Mr. Karzai last week, said he took exception to his "smugness" and "flippancy" when he was asked serious questions.

"I asked about what our mission in Afghanistan ought to be, and I thought President Karzai's response was a non-response," Mr. Corker said on CNN's "State of the Union" program. "When I pushed him further, he basically said, 'Look, this is your mission,' which made me feel that our partnership there was not quite, I think, what Americans would like to see."

Sen. Bob Casey, a Pennsylvania Democrat who also met with the Afghan president last week, agreed that Mr. Karzai has been less than fully cooperative.

"I was in the same meeting, and some of the concerns that [Mr. Corker] raises are very well founded," Mr. Casey said on CNN.

Pakistan says it has 175,000 troops fighting in the rugged and mountainous region to defeat Taliban fighters who had taken over after being driven out of Afghanistan by U.S.-led forces in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The Taliban had provided safe harbor to al Qaeda and bin Laden, prompting the U.S. invasion.

As to the whereabouts of bin Laden, Mr. Jones said Sunday that he isn't sure whether he is alive or dead.

"The truth is, I don't think anybody knows for sure," the retired Marine general said.

As if to emphasize the disagreement, Mr. Zardari says he thinks bin Laden is dead, while Mr. Karzai has said that he thinks the terrorist leader is alive.

When Mr. Zardari was asked on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday about bin Laden's whereabouts, he quipped that since the United States has been searching for him for eight years, "you tell me."

"You've lost him in Tora Bora - I didn't," he said.

Still, Mr. Zardari said that his country will continue to cooperate with the United States in searching for bin Laden.

"The world is looking for him, and we are part of the world," he said.

Mr. Jones vowed that U.S. intelligence agencies won't stop searching for confirmed sightings of bin Laden. "We'll just continue to press on and we'll see what happens there," he said.

He added that even if bin Laden's influence and effectiveness have waned within al Qaeda, finding and capturing the mastermind behind the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks would be a major symbolic blow to the anti-American terrorist movement worldwide.

"It's clear that movement has been resilient in replacing their leaders as quickly as we are able to capture or eliminate them," Mr. Jones said. "But I think symbolically it would be a very big thing if [bin Laden] weren't" in control.

Although it was driven out of Afghanistan years ago, the Taliban has been on the rise in recent months and is now widely considered to be a greater threat in Pakistan.

Gen. Petraeus said on Fox News that ultimately it's up to Pakistan - not the United States - to defeat Taliban militants in Pakistan.

"This is not a U.S. fight that Pakistan is carrying out at this point in this effort," he said. "This is a Pakistani fight, a Pakistani battle."

Gen. Petraeus said Pakistani authorities have responded well to increased Taliban activity in the region. After meeting with Mr. Zardari and his aides in Washington last week, the general said the Pakistani leader has a good understanding of how best to fight and root out the Taliban.

"I can tell you that in our dialogue with Pakistani leaders this past week there is a clear recognition of the concept of counterinsurgency operations, of employing all the tools of government - a 'whole government' approach," Gen. Petraeus said later Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union" program.

While acknowledging that a "trust deficit" had emerged between Washington and Pakistan, Gen. Petraeus said that last week's meetings with Pakistani and Afghan officials in Washington were "quite productive and positive."

"I think most participants assessed after the conduct of the trilateral meetings that not just the rhetoric, but even the substance exceeded expectations," Gen. Petraeus said.

<http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/11/taliban-a-threat-to-pakistans-very-existence/>

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Washington Post
May 7, 2009

Pentagon Wants To Beef Up For Cyber Warfare

By Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- Cyber espionage and attacks from well-funded nations or terror groups are the biggest threats to the military's computer networks, a top officer said Thursday.

Air Force Gen. Kevin Chilton, who heads U.S. Strategic Command, said he worries that foes will learn to disable or distort battlefield communications. Chilton told reporters that even as the Pentagon improves its network defenses against hackers, he needs more people, training and resources to hone offensive cyber war capacity.

At the same time, however, he asserted that the U.S. would consider using military force against an enemy who attacks and disrupts the nation's critical networks.

"Our job would be to present options. I don't think you take anything off the table when you provide options" to the defense secretary or president, in the wake of an attack, whether the weapon is a missile or a computer program, he said.

Chilton's comments shed the most light to date on the Pentagon's ongoing debate over how to beef up its abilities to wage and defend against cyber warfare. And they came as the military is planning to set up a new cyber command at Fort Meade in Maryland that would report to Strategic Command.

In a wide-ranging discussion of the military's cyber issues, Chilton said the Pentagon's unclassified networks are probed thousands of times a day, as hackers try to steal information on military programs or planning.

"I worry when I see that important information is taken from our networks," he said. To date, he said there have been no major attacks against the military's networks, only intrusions or efforts to steal data. Asked directly whether probes have been traced to China, al-Qaida or other groups, Chilton declined to answer.

His biggest fear, however, is that enemies hack into military battlefield systems, and when a U.S. commander sends out an order that says forces should go left, it's changed to say forces should go right. While most systems are classified and walled off, he said there are often ways to cross into those networks.

The other worry is more internal. When a soldier or sailor sits down at a computer, Chilton said "it's like he's stepping to the guard gate at his base," and can open the digital gate and let adversaries in.

Pentagon plans for a new command are a response to concerns that the offensive and defensive cyber operations are currently separate, and not as coordinated as they should be. Chilton said he needs 2,000-4,000 more workers over the next five years to provide the expertise needed for both offensive and defensive cyber operations. He said it is not clear yet how much additional money he needs.

He said there is no timeline for the creation of a new cyber command, noting that the idea has not gotten final approval from Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

The military, Chilton said, must expand its ability to quickly remedy software problems, change computer configurations and to know who is on the network and what they are doing.

In some warfighting areas the U.S. is dominant, but he said he can't say the same for the digital battlefield just yet.

While enemies need only a computer to join the fight, the military has improved its defenses to the point where it will take larger, more educated, well-funded organizations or nations to pose a real threat.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/07/AR2009050703078.html>

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Washington Times

May 12, 2009

China Blocks U.S. from Cyber Warfare

By Bill Gertz

China has developed more secure operating software for its tens of millions of computers and is already installing it on government and military systems, hoping to make Beijing's networks impenetrable to U.S. military and intelligence agencies.

The secure operating system, known as Kylin, was disclosed to Congress during recent hearings that provided new details on how China's government is preparing to wage cyberwarfare with the United States.

"We are in the early stages of a cyber arms race and need to respond accordingly," said Kevin G. Coleman, a private security specialist who advises the government on cybersecurity. He discussed Kylin during a hearing of the U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission on April 30.

The deployment of Kylin is significant, Mr. Coleman said, because the system has "hardened" key Chinese servers. U.S. offensive cyberwar capabilities have been focused on getting into Chinese government and military computers outfitted with less secure operating systems like those made by Microsoft Corp.

"This action also made our offensive cybercapabilities ineffective against them, given the cyberweapons were designed to be used against Linux, UNIX and Windows," he said.

The secure operating system was disclosed as computer hackers in China - some of them sponsored by the communist government and military - are engaged in aggressive attacks against the United States, said officials and experts who disclosed new details of what was described as a growing war in cyberspace.

These experts say Beijing's military is recruiting computer hackers for its forces, including one specialist identified in congressional testimony who set up a company that was traced to attacks that penetrated Pentagon computers.

Chinese Embassy spokesman Wang Baodong declined immediate comment. But Jiang Yu, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, said April 23 that the reports of Chinese hacking into Pentagon computers were false.

"Relevant authorities of the Chinese government attach great importance to cracking down on cybercrimes," Ms. Jiang said. "We believe it is extremely irresponsible to accuse China of being the source of attacks prior to any serious investigation."

Mr. Coleman, a computer security specialist at Technolytics and a consultant to the director of national intelligence and U.S. Strategic Command, said Chinese state or state-affiliated entities are on a wartime footing in seeking electronic information from the U.S. government, contractors and industrial computer networks.

Mr. Coleman said in an interview that China's Kylin system was under development since 2001 and the first computers to use it are government and military servers that were converted beginning in 2007.

Additionally, Mr. Coleman said, the Chinese have developed a secure microprocessor that, unlike U.S.-made chips, is known to be hardened against external access by a hacker or automated malicious software.

"If you add a hardened microchip and a hardened operating system, that makes a really good solid platform for defending infrastructure [from external attack]," Mr. Coleman said.

U.S. operating system software, including Microsoft, used open-source and offshore code that makes it less secure and vulnerable to software "trap doors" that could allow access in wartime, he explained.

"What's so interesting from a strategic standpoint is that in the cyberarena, China is playing chess while we're playing checkers," he said.

Asked whether the United States would win a cyberwar with China, Mr. Coleman said it would be a draw because China, the United States and Russia are matched equally in the new type of warfare.

Rafal A. Rohozinski, a Canadian computer security specialist who also testified at the commission hearing, explained how he took part in a two-year investigation that uncovered a sophisticated worldwide computer attack network that appeared to be a Chinese-government-sponsored program called GhostNet, whose electronic strikes were traced to e-mails from Hainan island in the South China Sea.

GhostNet was able to completely take over targeted computers and then download documents and information. Some of the data stolen were sensitive financial and visa information on foreign government networks at overseas embassies, Mr. Rohozinski said.

The China-based computer network used sophisticated break-in techniques that are generally beyond the capabilities of nongovernment hackers, Mr. Rohozinski said.

Using surveillance techniques, the investigators observed GhostNet hackers stealing sensitive computer documents from embassy computers and nongovernmental organizations.

"It was a do-it-yourself signals intelligence operation," Mr. Rohozinski said of the network, which took over about 1,200 computers in 103 nations, targeted specifically at overseas Tibetans linked to the exiled Dalai Lama.

Mr. Rohozinski, chief executive officer of the SecDev Group and an advisory board member at the Citizen Lab at the Munk Center for International Studies at the University of Toronto in Ontario, said the GhostNet operation was likely part of a much bigger cyberintelligence effort by China to silence or thwart its perceived opponents.

A third computer specialist, Alan Paller, told the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on April 29 that China's military in 2005 recruited Tan Dailin, a graduate student at Sichuan University, after he showed off his hacker skills at an annual contest.

Mr. Paller, a computer security specialist with the SANS Institute, said the Chinese military put the hacker through a 30-day, 16-hour-a-day workshop "where he learned to develop really high-end attacks and honed his skills."

A hacker team headed by Mr. Tan then won other computer warfare contests against Chinese military units in Chengdu, in Sichuan province.

Mr. Paller said that a short time later, Mr. Tan "set up a little company. No one's exactly sure where all the money came from, but it was in September 2005 when he won it. By December, he was found inside [Defense Department] computers, well inside DoD computers," Mr. Paller said.

A Pentagon official said at the time that Chinese military hackers were detected breaking into the unclassified e-mail on a network near the office of Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates in June 2007.

Additional details of Chinese cyberattacks were disclosed recently by Joel F. Brenner, the national counterintelligence executive, the nation's most senior counterintelligence coordinator.

Mr. Brenner stated in a speech in Texas last month that cyberactivities by China and Russia are widespread and "we know how to deal with these," including widely reported "Chinese penetrations of unclassified DoD networks."

"Those are more sophisticated, though hardly state of the art," he said. "Frankly, I worry more about attacks we can't even see, which the Russians are good at. The Chinese are relentless and don't seem to care about getting caught. And we have seen Chinese network operations inside certain of our electricity grids."

Mr. Brenner said there are minimal concerns about a Chinese cyberattack to shut down U.S. banking networks because "they have too much money invested here.

"Our electricity grid? No, not now. But if there were a dust-up over Taiwan, these answers might be different," he said.

Aggressive Chinese computer hacking has been known for years, but the U.S. government in the past was reluctant to detail the activities.

The CIA, for example, sponsored research in the late 1990s that sought to minimize Chinese cyberwarfare capabilities, under the idea that highlighting such activities would hype the threat.

Researcher James Mulvenon, for instance, stated during a 1998 conference that China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) "does not currently have a coherent [information warfare] doctrine, certainly nothing compared to U.S. doctrinal writings on the subject."

Mr. Mulvenon stated in one report that "while PLA [information warfare] capabilities are growing, they do not match even the primitive sophistication of their underlying strategies."

Mr. Mulvenon has since changed his views and has identified Chinese computer-based warfare as a major threat to the Pentagon.

Mr. Coleman said China's military is equal to U.S. and Russian military cyberwarfare.

"This is a three-horse race, and it is a dead heat," Mr. Coleman said.

The National University of China is the strategic adviser to the Chinese military on cyberwarfare and the Ministry of Science and Technology, he said.

Several computer security specialists recently sounded public alarm about the growing number of cyberattacks from China and Russia.

China, based on state-approved writings, thinks the United States is "already is carrying out offensive cyberespionage and exploitation against China," Mr. Coleman said.

In response, China is taking steps to protect its own computer and information networks so that it can "go on the offensive," he said.

Mr. Coleman said one indication of the problem was identified by Solutionary, a computer security company that in March detected 128 "acts of cyberaggression" tied to Internet addresses in China.

"These acts should serve as a warning that clearly indicates just how far along China's cyberintelligence collection capabilities are," Mr. Coleman said.

A Pentagon spokesman, Air Force Lt. Col. Eric Butterbaugh, would not comment on Chinese cyberattacks directly but said "cyberspace is a war-fighting domain, critical to military operations: We must protect it."

The Pentagon's Global Information Grid is hit with "millions of scans" - not intrusion attempts - every day, Lt. Butterbaugh said.

"The nature of the threat is large and diverse, and includes recreational hackers, self-styled cybervigilantes, various groups with nationalistic or ideological agendas, transnational actors, and nation-states," he said. "We have seen attempts by a variety of state and nonstate sponsored organizations to gain unauthorized access to, or otherwise degrade, DoD information systems."

Air Force Gen. Kevin Chilton, commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, said May 7 that a joint cybercommand is needed under the Pentagon to better integrate military and civilian cybercapabilities and defenses. Gen. Chilton said he favors creating the joint command at Fort Meade, Md., where the National Security Agency is located. The command should be a subunit of Strategic Command, located at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Mr. Gates said last month that the National Security Council is heading up a strategic review of U.S. cybercapabilities and is considering creating a subunified command within Strategic Command.

Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said Mr. Gates has not decided on the subunified command to handle cyberwarfare issues and is waiting for the completion of the White House review of cyberwarfare and security issues, which is past due from the 60-day deadline imposed by Congress.

Mr. Gates "thought it would be prudent to wait for their work before looking at potential organization structures," Mr. Whitman said in an interview.

<http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/12/china-bolsters-for-cyber-arms-race-with-us/>

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U.S. General Reserves Right to Use Force, Even Nuclear, in Response to Cyber Attack

By Elaine M. Grossman

WASHINGTON -- The top U.S. commander for strategic combat said last week that the White House retains the option to respond with physical force -- potentially even using nuclear weapons -- if a foreign entity conducts a disabling cyber attack against U.S. computer networks (see *GSN*, Nov. 7, 2008).

While a nuclear response appears highly unlikely, it might be counted among a full range of options offered to the president following a major computer attack, suggested Gen. Kevin Chilton, who heads U.S. Strategic Command. However, the general noted, it might be no easy task to identify with certainty the origin of a cyber strike.

"I think you don't take any response options off the table from an attack on the United States of America," he told reporters during a Defense Writers Group breakfast on Thursday. "Why would we constrain ourselves on how we respond?"

Hackers located in China are believed to have carried out a growing number of computer intrusions, most recently accessing large amounts of data on the Defense Department's \$300 billion Joint Strike Fighter program, the *Wall Street Journal* reported last month. Earlier reported incidents include cyber break-ins of the U.S. electrical power grid, where suspected Chinese and Russian hackers left behind software that could be activated later to disrupt service.

Should the breaches evolve into more serious computer attacks against the United States, Chilton said he could not rule out the possibility of a military salvo against a nation like China, even though Beijing has nuclear arms. He rejected the idea that such a conflict would necessarily risk going nuclear.

"I don't think that's true," Chilton said.

At the same time, the general insisted that all strike options, including nuclear, would remain available to the commander in chief in defending the nation from cyber strikes.

"I think that's been our policy on any attack on the United States of America," Chilton said. "And I don't see any reason to treat cyber any differently. I mean, why would we tie the president's hands? I can't. It's up to the president to decide."

"They call this 'calculated ambiguity,' but it's just stupid," said Jeffrey Lewis, who directs the Nuclear Strategy and Nonproliferation Initiative at the New America Foundation. Longtime U.S. policy discourages government leaders from either overtly threatening or ruling out the use of nuclear weapons, he explained in a Friday telephone interview.

Sometimes the result is that policy-makers or military officials appear to leave open the possibility of a response drastically out of proportion to an adversary's action, Lewis said.

Instead, he advocates alternatives such as declaring the purpose of nuclear weapons to be limited to defense against weapons of mass destruction, or calling atomic arms "weapons of last resort."

At the same time, the potential gravity of cyber warfare should not be underestimated, some experts say.

"I think it's important not to trivialize the impact of a cyber attack," said Eugene Fidell, a visiting lecturer on military law at Yale Law School and president of the National Institute of Military Justice. "From my perspective, it's not a complete answer to say let's blast a city because of what hackers did. But [what] if those ... hackers shut down the Northeast?"

Chilton said international law would allow the United States, as a sovereign nation, as much a right to an armed self-defense following a cyber attack as it has in response to a physical salvo.

"The Law of Armed Conflict will apply to this domain," the strategic commander said. "I guess I've not heard anybody argue back when I've said that."

The reality is that international law is somewhat less clear, according to Gary Solis, who teaches the law of war at Georgetown Law School.

"Any attack on another state -- be it on land, at sea, in the air or in the cyber domain -- constitutes an attack," he said. "But there is nothing in the Law of Armed Conflict that addresses cyber responses."

The Law of Armed Conflict is actually not a single law but a collection of treaties and protocols widely understood to circumscribe actions in warfare. There is no single method of enforcing or adjudicating these norms, Solis noted. So it often falls to the international community to impose penalties such as trade embargoes or military action in response to perceived infractions.

Solis said he does not regard what Chilton discussed -- the justification for using armed force -- as part of the Law of Armed Conflict, which focuses instead on acceptable conduct once engaged in war. For that reason, he took issue with Chilton's statement that the law condones a particular type of military response.

"If there was an assertion that it was clear in the Law of Armed Conflict that an armed response is appropriate, I would not agree," Solis said. "The best you could do is operate by analogy."

For example, one might point to historical precedent, rather than the writ of law, as a basis for action in response to a cyber attack, he said.

"This is just too new and, for now at least, too unexamined to say straight up that an armed response is an appropriate response," Solis said.

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Pakistan Observer

OPINION

10 May 2009

Taliban and the Web of Conspiracies

Gen Mirza Aslam Beg

There is a deliberate effort on the part of very responsible personalities in USA to pressurize Pakistan to "use every possible option to eliminate Taliban and secure Pakistan." It has also been claimed that Taliban will reach Islamabad and that Pakistani nuclear assets would fall into their hands. Sequel to such statements some of our political leaders are also warning the Pakistanis of the eminent danger that the nation faces on account of Taliban. In the context of these statements, let us discern what reality lies behind the orchestration of these views, which Dr. S.M. Koreshi, has rightly called this psychological warfare, as the process of "dehumanization, demonization and destabilization." I would add one more to it: denuclearization.

First of all, we must understand the dynamics operating behind the phenomenon called, Taliban. The western media, as well as we ourselves, have created such 'constructs' and have become their victim. For example 'War on Terror' was one such construct. The reality however is that these are 'Wars of Liberation' and America has not been able to win any of these wars and has been humiliated as a consequence of the self-created construct, and now has abandoned the use of the term - War on Terror. The stark reality is that the people of Iraq, Afghanistan and Kashmir, are fighting for their freedom, yet their armed resistance against aggression is being demonized as terrorism. The Taliban in Afghanistan are the real Taliban who are relentlessly struggling against the occupation of Afghanistan by foreign forces. They do get help from our tribal areas and enter our borders, but soon return to rejoin the operation. We have around a hundred thousand or more soldiers protecting our western frontiers, who have not been able to stop them, Why? The western media in general and the people of USA in particular, are phobic about Osama bin Laden and Al-qaeda – another construct. Every Islamic Resistance is being termed Al-qaeda. Mullah Omar's spokesman, Zabitullah Mujahid, explains the difference between Taliban and Al-qaeda: "They are global, we are regional. We two are separate. We don't fight under their command. Recently we have welcomed some of their fighters," under the banner of the shadow army. As a result of this misconception, no success has been achieved anywhere; neither the Taliban have been eliminated nor Al-qaeda has been defeated. General Musharraf launched military operation in 2004, against our tribals in Waziristan, "to catch the master-mind." The tribals retaliated, creating serious security problems. Erroneously, we started calling them Taliban, whereas they are our own tribals. If we had dealt with them, with compassion, these very people could have turned into our vital force. This is also true that within them there are a whole lot of foreign infiltrators and agent saboteurs, who are instigating the local people to fight against our Government. These very tribals, prior to 2004, had never turned the barrel of their guns towards Pakistan, but they did react when they were subjected to attack. The strategy adopted by the NWFPP Government was to win over the hearts of our estranged tribals, who responded positively.

The people of Dir and Swat are demanding the implementation of "Nizam-e-Adal" which was also acceptable and endorsed by the Parliament. But this agreement is a matter of great distress for USA and their allies. We also know

that the conspiracies being hatched from the territory of Afghanistan at the behest of the Indians, who took advantage of the concessions granted to CIA in 2002 to operate in our tribal areas. India fully collaborated in this conspiracy and we are reaping its consequences now. The ostensible purpose is, to denuclearize Pakistan and establish the hegemony of India from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka. The incursions of Taliban into Buner and their onward march was presented in such frightful manner to demoralize the Pakistani nation. As a matter of fact the propaganda launched by media has been instrumental in sapping the morale of the people. In the meantime, the Nizam-e-Adal accord reached with the people of Swat has been high-jacked by the militants from the adjoining tribal areas joined by the intruders from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Xingjiang and Chechnya. Thus the government of Pakistan has rightly decided to take punitive action and eliminate the threat created as a conspiracy for 'regime change in Pakistan.' There have been three previous attempts for Regime Change in the recent past.

One: Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan in October 2007, under the deal with USA and General Musharraf. Having assessed the mood of the nation, she rejected the deal and paid with her life, to defeat the conspiracy of 'Regime Change'. Two: In 2008, had General Kiyani not kept the army out of the election process on 18th October, the results would have been far different and General Musharraf and his coteries would have remained in power. Three: In the same way, there was a conspiracy linked with the Long March of 15th March, but the situation was defused by the government and the army, before the matter could get out of control. With reference to this conspiracy there was news in the Washington Post that our Army was poised to take over the political power but it was 'USA' which intervened to prevent the Army from taking such a step, - a crude attempt to create ill-will between the Government and the Army leadership. When the conspiracy failed then all the responsibility was thrown on the shoulders of the Army. Now an orchestrated attempt is being made to demoralize the nation. News was published in New York Times that "the days of Zardari are numbered." The Wall Street Journal also reported that "Asif Zardari has failed to deliver." In other words, "the dictations given to Zardari by USA were not being fulfilled and therefore he was not to be trusted, hence the need for change." USA is also making determined efforts that Peoples Party (PPP) and Muslim League (N), who have achieved understanding among themselves, differences be created between them to render the Government weak and incompetent. Tempting offers have also been made to Nawaz Sharif as the new Prime Minister. On the contrary, the government, Mr. Nawaz Sharif and the Army leadership are fully alive to such conspiracies and have the resolve to defeat them.

As far as Sufi Muhammad's recent statements are concerned, he seems to be helpless, because, the militants have high-jacked the Peace Accord and are interfering in the affairs of Swat and Buner. The military action against them consequently has started. It requires a cool mind to objectively assess the conspiracy behind the militants hold over Buner and Swat. USA is also threatening that should Pakistan hesitate to take action against the extremists, they themselves will take the initiative. But the ironical fact is that USA itself has not been able to defeat the Taliban in Afghanistan, and how can they deliver in our tribal areas. Thus, the impending military operations by the army are the antidote to the fourth conspiracy. USA therefore will have to revise its AFPAC policy and support Pakistan to clear the mess.

India is acquiring latest military technologies of which we are so afraid of. The USA and its allies possess such technologies they used in abundance in the 'shock and awe' wars in Iraq, Lebanon, Ghaza and Afghanistan, yet they have not been able to win any of these wars. The aircrafts, gunships, tanks and guns, alone cannot deliver. Therefore the employment of about three infantry brigades in Swat is not enough. We need at least three to four infantry divisions – the foot soldiers, to flush-out light footed militants. Moreover, the American and NATO troops can provide very meaningful support in the way of satellite intelligence, heli logistic support and Afghan/Pak border surveillance. The success in war would depend upon commitment and the spirit of sacrifice for the cause - the intangibles, which are the main determinants of the Pak forces.

The Pakistan Government and our Armed forces have succeeded in defeating three conspiracies against Pakistan and the fourth one is in the offing. The Waziristan and Balochistan issues will also be politically settled through the inherent power of the elected government, which is quite capable of meeting the challenges, whereas the unelected governments of the past have contributed to the manifold problems that we face now. The good news is that the occupation forces in Afghanistan, may soon leave, and with that decision the situation in Balochistan and Waziristan would automatically get defused. The good days therefore are ahead and the nation shall again rise to strength and viability, Insha Allah. We must not devalue our 'Will' to survive with respect and dignity and without servility. The US statesman, Woodrow Wilson said: "There is a price which is too great to pay for peace and that price can be put in one word. One cannot pay the price of self-respect."

—The writer is Chairman FRIENDS.

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New York Times
May 10, 2009

The Trouble with Zero

By PHILIP TAUBMAN

Almost from the moment the first atomic bomb was detonated in New Mexico in July 1945, the menacing aura of the nuclear age has inspired visions of a world free of nuclear weapons. Never more so than now, with the prospect that the Taliban could someday control Pakistan's nuclear weapons, North Korea might develop nuclear-tipped missiles, Iran may soon become a nuclear power and terrorists could get a bomb.

A growing army of nuclear abolitionists, concerned that proliferation could catch fire at any moment, is advancing the cause, led by Barack Obama, the first president to make nuclear disarmament a centerpiece of American defense policy.

Last week, Mr. Obama was mired in the gritty business of trying to coax Pakistan's president, Asif Ali Zardari, and the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai, into a more cooperative relationship and a more determined fight against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Administration officials did not sound sanguine about the prospects, and the White House meeting might well have left Mr. Obama yearning for a more promising long-term strategy to keep the Taliban away from nuclear weapons.

Yet even as the allure of disarmament grows, the obstacles seem as daunting as ever. Going to zero, as the nuclear cognoscenti put it, is a deceptively simple notion; just about everyone who knows nuclear weapons agrees it would be wickedly difficult to achieve.

That's because it would require a sea change in a dizzying array of defense matters, ranging from core defense policies to highly technical weapons programs. To fully grasp the political and military implications, consider what would have been involved had the great powers of the 19th century decided to abolish gunpowder.

Mr. Obama acknowledges that getting to zero won't be easy. "The goal will not be reached quickly — perhaps not in my lifetime," he declared last month before a huge crowd in Prague. "It will take patience and persistence."

But like other proponents, Mr. Obama has made the eradication of nuclear weapons a pivotal goal, no matter how distant, to provide a lodestar for world leaders and citizens alike.

The new appeal of an old idea that long seemed quixotic is driven by the rise of new nuclear threats that in some ways make the nuclear equation more ominous and volatile than during the cold war, even though there are far fewer weapons now. Mr. Obama said it himself in Prague: "In a strange turn of history, the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up."

Nuclear conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was a prospect so harrowing that American and Soviet leaders recognized it was untenable, even as their generals planned for Armageddon. They possessed some 70,000 nuclear warheads between them in the 1980s, but the weapons were under firm control and neither side dared risk the retaliation that a first strike would draw. The balance of terror, in effect, neutralized nuclear weapons.

The dynamic today is much less stable, and more difficult for the United States to manage, as the turbulence in Pakistan shows. As the nuclear club expands, the security of weapons and technology diminishes. Terrorists would have no compunction about using a nuclear weapon, and their target could not easily retaliate against an elusive, stateless group.

Faced with these dangers, Mr. Obama is banding with fellow leaders like President Dimitri Medvedev of Russia and Gordon Brown, the British prime minister, to push for a series of steps to reduce nuclear threats in the near term, while preparing ground for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Obama administration and other advocates favor a reduction in American and Russian nuclear arsenals, to be followed by talks that include nations with smaller nuclear arsenals, like China. They want the United States Senate to ratify the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; would strengthen the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; and would seek an accord to verifiably ban the production of fissile materials intended for use in nuclear weapons.

Sam Nunn, the former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, likens such steps to building "a base camp" that offers "a vantage point from which the summit is visible and the final ascent to the mountaintop is

achievable.” It is an audacious agenda, but as alarm about nuclear threats rises, the chances of success seem to be growing, at least for some interim steps.

Past efforts have foundered. A 1946 plan named after the American financier Bernard Baruch died partly because its scheme to have a powerful international agency control nuclear technology required the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council to give up their veto power on some nuclear matters. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 41 years old now, has proved ineffectual in moving the world toward nuclear disarmament.

Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev briefly considered eliminating nuclear weapons, during their 1986 summit meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland. The idea died when Mr. Reagan refused to abandon his missile defense program.

Mr. Gorbachev, still pushing hard for nuclear disarmament 23 years later, co-hosted an international conference on nuclear issues in Rome last month, a few weeks after Mr. Obama was in Prague. Mr. Gorbachev noted that nuclear disarmament would be untenable to many nations if it left America with overwhelming superiority in conventional military forces. That is one of the biggest potential sticking points.

Nuclear disarmament would also upend decades of American defense strategies. Since early in the cold war, they have been pinned to the chilling concept that a nuclear attack on the United States, and perhaps a chemical or biological attack, would be answered with a devastating nuclear strike.

Dismantling America’s nuclear deterrence strikes many defense experts as unwise, if not suicidal. They ardently believe that nuclear weapons have made global war less likely. Harold Brown, a former defense secretary, and John Deutch, a former C.I.A. director — both for Democratic presidents — argue that America will long need a potent nuclear arsenal for deterrence.

They also suggest that the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons is a distraction from, rather than an impetus to, more modest but significant steps to reduce nuclear threats. To counter such concerns, Mr. Obama promised in Prague that as long as nuclear weapons exist, America would “maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary” and defend allies.

How far can nuclear arms levels be reduced short of abolition while still providing deterrence? The United States and Russia are opening talks that seem likely to bring the number of operational strategic warheads on each side down to 1,500, possibly 1,000, from the present 2,200.

Those numbers are generally deemed ample for deterrence. But the limit might have to go to 500 or fewer before nuclear weapons states with smaller arsenals, including China, would start cutting. And thousands of American and Russian tactical nuclear weapons, designed for battlefield use, would have to be eliminated, too. At those levels, there is intense debate about whether American security would be gravely undermined.

One solution suggested by abolition advocates would be a form of latent or virtual deterrence, based not on weapons all but ready to launch, but on the ability to reassemble or rebuild them.

If arsenals are drastically reduced, the next steps toward abolition could be even trickier. Since scientific and engineering knowledge cannot be expunged from mankind’s memory, the potential to build weapons will always exist. Efforts to hide a few weapons may be difficult to detect and prevent. And any nation able to enrich uranium usable in nuclear power plants, like Iran, has a capacity to produce highly enriched fuel for weapons. Nuclear arms experts have been analyzing these issues intently and have come up with plans to address them. The steps include improvements in the tools used to monitor and verify compliance with treaties and new ways to prevent cheating, including more intrusive inspections.

The enrichment problem, they say, could be solved by limiting the production of enriched uranium to internationally controlled fuel banks that would supply power reactors in places like Iran, eliminating the need for national enrichment plants.

The notion of nuclear disarmament gained credibility a few years ago when four cold war veterans — George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, former secretaries of state; William Perry, a former defense secretary; and Mr. Nunn — overcame their political differences to endorse the idea in a Wall Street Journal op-ed article. Now that it has been embraced by Presidents Obama and Medvedev, the notion seems to be moving from the realm of fantasy to the hardscrabble world of policy and politics.

How far it goes may depend on how much world leaders and the public accept the proposition, as Mr. Nunn sometimes says, that “we are in a race between cooperation and catastrophe.”

Philip Taubman, a former New York Times bureau chief in Moscow and Washington, is based at Stanford University, writing a book on nuclear threats.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/10/weekinreview/10taubman.html?ref=world&pagewanted=all>

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