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RIA Novosti
12 May 2009

Russia Waits for U.S. Proposals on Stored Nuclear Warheads - Lavrov

MOSCOW (RIA Novosti) - Moscow is awaiting Washington's proposals on control over the number of nuclear warheads stored by both countries, Russia's foreign minister said on Tuesday.

According to some sources, the U.S. is not planning to include control over currently stored nuclear warheads in the provisions of a new strategic arms reductions treaty aimed to replace the START-1 treaty due to expire in December this year.

"As to stored nuclear warheads, it is important to understand how they will be counted [toward the new limit]. We are waiting for U.S. proposals in order to analyze them in line with the principle of equally-assured security," Sergei Lavrov told reporters on Tuesday.

"We are not saying 'no' to the current U.S. standpoint. We want to wait and see how the U.S. formulates it in legal terms. We are convinced that the new treaty must cover all [nuclear] warheads and all delivery vehicles," the minister added.

The first round of "full-format" talks on the new treaty is due to take place in Moscow on May 18, with the aim of drawing up a draft deal before Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama meet in July.

Russia and the United States have a good chance of reaching an agreement on the treaty by the end of the year, Lavrov said.

"The informal rounds of talks ... have helped both countries understand that they have a good chance of overcoming differences and agreeing terms on controls over strategic offensive weapons and global nonproliferation," he said.

Lavrov recently visited the U.S. to prepare for the Obama-Medvedev summit and met with Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and other officials.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090512/121548312.html>

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China View
13 May 2009

India to Acquire Russian Nuclear Submarine on Lease by Year End

NEW DELHI, May 13 (Xinhua) -- India will acquire its first nuclear-capable submarine Akula II from Russia on a 10-year lease by the end of this year, a senior Indian Defense Ministry official said Wednesday.

"Russia was scheduled to deliver the submarine by next month. But, there has been a delay in delivery as the submarine to be delivered to India met with an accident in Russia, killing a number of sailors. And, now it has been postponed till year end," the official said, on condition of anonymity.

He said that the Indian Navy would get the submarine which is now undergoing repairs to be ready for sea trials before being finally delivered to India.

"Russian Defense Ministry told us that in seven to eight months' time, the nuclear submarine will reach India," he said.

The official said that the Indian Navy will acquire the submarine on a 10-year lease.

"Initially it will be for 10 years, following which a decision to extend the lease or not will be taken by the Indian Defense Ministry," he said.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-05/13/content_11368340.htm

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USA Today
May 13, 2009

U.S. Warhead Disposal in 15-year Backlog

By Peter Eisler, USA Today

WASHINGTON — President Obama plans deep new cuts in the U.S. nuclear arsenal at a time when the government faces a 15-year backlog of warheads already waiting to be dismantled and a need for billions of dollars in new facilities to store and dispose of the weapons' plutonium.

The logjam of thousands of retired warheads will grow considerably based on a promise made in April by Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to get their stockpiles far below levels set by current disarmament pacts.

Yet much of the infrastructure needed to dispose of those weapons don't exist yet, according to federal audits and other records reviewed by USA TODAY.

Dismantling the retired warheads — not counting the additional weapons that Obama wants to eliminate — will take until 2024, according to the National Nuclear Security Administration, which runs the weapons program. The schedule for disposing of the plutonium cores from those weapons runs past 2030.

Building the necessary plants and storage facilities "is expensive ... (and) is going to take a long time," says Linton Brooks, a former arms negotiator who headed the nuclear security administration from 2002 to 2007. "

That doesn't stop the president from taking more warheads off missiles and bombers and (adding to) to the backlog. It means the queue gets a lot longer."

Among the challenges:

*The Texas storage site for the plutonium "pits" from dismantled weapons could have capacity shortages by 2014, according to an inspector general audit earlier this year and a separate 2008 report by a federal oversight board.

*A plant to convert those pits into a form that can be processed into fuel for nuclear power reactors — the current disposal plan — hasn't been sited and isn't slated to be built until 2021. Projected cost: nearly \$4 billion.

*A \$4.8 billion plant being built to do final processing of the plutonium into mixed oxide reactor fuel at the Savannah River (S.C.) nuclear weapons site isn't slated to be running until 2016.

Obama's 2010 budget plan would boost spending for weapons disposition by \$4 million, or 5%, to \$84 million, according to the nuclear administration.

Timelines for eliminating the current backlog of retired warheads and the added weapons Obama wants to cut will depend on how far the reductions ultimately go, says Tom D'Agostino, head of the nuclear administration. He notes that a "nuclear posture review," due this fall, will help determine how much more storage and dismantlement capacity is needed.

"There are infrastructure hurdles, but ... until that review is done, substantial infrastructure changes would be premature," D'Agostino says. "I'm very impressed with the dismantlement rate," he adds, noting it has risen more than 150% since 2006.

Specific disassembly figures are secret, but a study of available data by the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Federation of American Scientists finds that, despite the rate increase, the Bush administration dismantled the

fewest warheads per year since the Eisenhower era. About 2,700 warheads remain deployed, 2,500 are in operational reserve and 4,200 are awaiting disassembly, the report says. Cuts by Obama could add a few thousand to that.

"No effort has really been made to transform (the nuclear weapons program) to meet the mission of nuclear weapons elimination," says Robert Alvarez, a scholar at the Institute for Policy Studies and former senior adviser at the Energy Department, which oversees the nuclear administration. Program funds "have gone mostly to maintain what we now recognize is an oversized nuclear stockpile."

http://www.usatoday.com/news/military/2009-05-12-nukes_N.htm

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RIA Novosti
13 May 2009

New Sea Trials of Nerpa Submarine Set for June

VLADIVOSTOK (RIA Novosti) - New sea trials of the Nerpa nuclear-powered submarine, which was damaged in a fatal accident during previous tests, will be conducted on June 15-20, Russia's Kommersant daily said on Wednesday.

On November 8 last year, while the Nerpa submarine was undergoing sea trials in the Sea of Japan, its on-board fire safety system went off, releasing deadly gas into the sleeping quarters. Three submariners and 17 shipyard workers were killed. There were 208 people, 81 of them submariners, on board the vessel at the time.

"Repairs on board the Nerpa submarine are almost complete," Kommersant quoted general director of the Amur shipyard Nikolai Povzyk as saying.

Povzyk said the Nerpa, which is due to be leased by the Indian Navy, could be ready by the yearend if the project received sufficient financing.

India has reportedly paid \$650 million for a 10-year lease of the 12,000-ton Nerpa nuclear attack submarine. Indian media has reported that the construction of the vessel was partially financed by the country's government.

The accident on K-152 Nerpa, an Akula II class nuclear-powered attack submarine, was the Russian Navy's worst since the sinking of the Kursk nuclear submarine in 2000, which claimed the lives of all 118 personnel on board.

An investigation has supported the conclusion that the tragedy was caused by the mishandling of a temperature sensor on board which led to deadly Freon gas being released.

Submariner Dmitry Grobov has been charged with "involuntary manslaughter" for entering the wrong temperature data for the submarine's living quarters, which caused the fire suppression system to release the Freon gas.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090513/121572388.html>

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Global Security Newswire
May 14, 2009

Kazakhstan to Continuing Destroying Old ICBM Launchers

The Kazakh Senate yesterday approved an amendment that would extend by seven years an agreement with the United States to destroy ICBM silo launchers left over from Kazakhstan's days as a Soviet republic, Interfax reported (see *GSN*, Nov. 13, 2008).

The amendment to the agreement, which also covers nuclear proliferation prevention and responses to emergencies, now awaits the signature of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev (Interfax I, May 13).

A Kazakh official yesterday also told senators of ongoing efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring potential radiological "dirty bomb" material from a Soviet-era nuclear test site, Interfax reported. The government has reinforced physical barriers and plans to deploy 200 additional troops to guard tunnels at the shuttered Semipalatinsk site in eastern Kazakhstan.

"One hundred and eighty-one tunnels were once closed down on the Degelen site," Aset Magauov, deputy energy and mineral resources minister, told the Senate. "But after Sept. 11, the U.S. raised the issue of strengthening the physical barriers in them. An agreement was signed precisely for this reason and we continued this work with the United States' financial backing and with Russia's technical assistance to lift all potential threats of 'dirty bombs' emerging" (Interfax, May 13).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20090514_9814.php

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Kyiv Post
15 May 2009

Yushchenko: There will never be Nuclear Weapons on Ukrainian Soil

Ukraine is ready to give international guarantees that foreign countries' nuclear weapons will not be deployed on its territory if the country enters NATO, Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko said.

"We are ready to give international guarantees that nuclear weapons will never be deployed on our soil," Yushchenko said at a meeting held in the closed club of Swiss political and business in Reitnau, Switzerland.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/nation/41475>

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Army.com
May 12, 2009

Military Needs New Strategy for Present, Future Threats, General Says

By Gerry J. Gilmore

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (American Forces Press Service) – The U.S. military requires a new, grand strategy to address today's complex security threats as well as tomorrow's challenges, a senior U.S. military officer said here today.

"We have a real need for a grand strategy; any analysis shows that we have that need," Marine Corps Gen. James N. Mattis, commander of U.S. Joint Forces Command, told attendees at the annual Joint Warfighting Conference held here today through May 14.

Based in Norfolk, Va., Joint Forces Command is one of the 10 unified combatant commands, and it is the primary U.S. military force provider. Mattis wears a second hat as NATO's supreme allied commander for transformation.

The U.S. military's previous grand strategy was based on containment of the Soviet Union, Mattis said, noting that threat ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

However, today's national security environment is much more complex than that of 20 years ago, Mattis said. The emergence of global terrorism, the likelihood that weaker or failed states will rely on a mix of conventional and unconventional forces, known as hybrid warfare, to battle U.S. forces, and the possibility that a near-peer competitor may one day challenge U.S. national security interests, he said, are driving efforts to develop a new, balanced and comprehensive strategy that addresses all of those scenarios.

"Our predicaments today are complex, but I do not believe they are more complex than many that civilizations have faced in the past," Mattis said.

President Barack Obama and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates are addressing how the military will confront terrorist threats that exist in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Mattis said, through a multi-faceted strategy that employs military, political, diplomatic, economic development and other components.

Joint Forces Command is working with senior civilian and military leaders and allies, Mattis said, to develop an overarching, grand strategy that addresses current threats, such as terrorism, as well as future threats. Mattis said his

organization is revising its Joint Operating Environment report, known as the JOE, which predicts potential threats to U.S. national security in the years ahead.

The current JOE report, Mattis said, predicts a future of persistent conflict and hybrid enemy threats, global instability, increasing access to weapons of mass destruction, the rise of regional state and nonstate actors, and the unpredictability of security threats.

Input from the JOE influences the Quadrennial Defense Review, a congressionally mandated report prepared every four years that also seeks to predict future threats while balancing military capabilities to confront them, he said.

The companion piece to the JOE, known as the Capstone concept for joint operations, Mattis said, represents Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Adm. Mike Mullen's vision for how the joint force will operate in the future, and it provides proposed solutions to envisioned security threats presented in the JOE. The Capstone also is used to guide U.S. military force experimentation and development efforts, he added.

The JOE outlines the possible problems or threats confronting U.S. joint military forces in the future, Mattis explained, while the Capstone concept presents proposed solutions.

In about two weeks, Mattis said, U.S. war gamers will begin experimenting with the Capstone concept's solutions "to see if we got it right."

The upcoming experiments, the general said, will feature scenarios that pit U.S. joint forces against three types of enemies: a globally-networked terrorist threat, a peer competitor, and a failed or failing state.

The JOE report, the Capstone concept and the war games are used to help answer questions that are important to U.S. national security, Mattis said.

"That is," he said, "how to maintain our conventional and nuclear superiority -- behind which the international community derives great benefit -- while we build a joint force that can equally checkmate and defeat irregular threats."

<http://www.army.com/news/item/5150>

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Ha'aretz – Israel
12 May 2009

Iran's Missiles not an Existential Threat, Study says

By Amos Harel

Iran is currently capable of carrying out a conventional missile attack on Israel - a substantial but not existential threat, say two Israeli analysts who will present their research on Tehran's missile capacity tomorrow. The analysts consider Iran's missile arsenal its main deterrent and describe the country's significant investments in the area.

The research was carried out by Uzi Rubin, former head of the Defense Ministry's Homa Project (code for the Arrow anti-ballistic missile system), and Tal Inbar, head of the Fisher Institute for Air and Space Strategic Studies.

The two studies will be presented at an annual conference at the institute, which this year is dedicated to the missile and rocket threat on Israel.

The analysts' assessments are particularly relevant given estimates that Tehran is moving closer to acquiring a nuclear capability. The Western media is also speculating that Israel might carry out an attack against Iran's nuclear installations.

Rubin notes that while moderate Arab states emphasize air power, Iran and Syria (and by extension Hamas and Hezbollah) are adopting a "resistance" doctrine giving priority to missiles and rockets as the best response to Western air superiority.

Rubin relies on open source materials and says Iran showcases its missiles at every opportunity, while its leaders stress the weapon's importance to national security.

At a time when most Iranian military aircraft are remnants of the Shah era, the missile systems are significantly more modern and displayed during parades and expos. Test launches receive dramatic media coverage; Rubin says Iran's leaders describe their missile arsenal as the "heart of its deterrent." Its role is "to defend, deter and influence."

Iran's leaders have said they are ready to confront both the "enemies across the ocean" (the United States) and any Israeli attack. Iran has thus identified 35 enemy targets, including bases and concentrations of forces within 2,000 kilometers of the country's borders. This is the declared missile range in Iran's arsenal.

Since Tehran denies it is working on nuclear weapons, it also claims it does not develop missiles with a range exceeding 2,000 kilometers. It says the reports in the West are the product of "Zionist propaganda" aimed to frighten the Europeans.

Rubin adds that the Iranian missiles are presented to the public as scientific and engineering advances that show the regime's determination to protect the people. Rubin writes that "missiles are an equalizer, balancing the superiority of Israel's air force."

He says Iran prides itself on being able to produce missiles at a rate carmakers produce cars. "It is therefore reasonable to assume that Iran will aspire to acquire at least hundreds of Shehab missiles and rely on the Shehab as a sort of super-Katyusha," he writes.

Speaking with Haaretz, Rubin avoided estimating the number of long-range missiles currently in Iran's arsenal. But he appears to attribute to the missiles greater destructive power than the American researcher Anthony Cordesman, who said during a lecture in Israel last year that the number of Iranian missiles capable of striking Israel is very limited.

Inbar, meanwhile, notes the origins of Iran's focus on missiles: the damage caused by Iraqi bombing during the eight-year war between the two in the 1980s. Only at the end of that conflict did Iran speed up the development of its missile arsenal, with help from North Korea, China and Russia.

Inbar estimates that in two years, Iran's missiles will be capable of traveling 3,000 kilometers. In 2004, Iran successfully tested an upgraded Shehab-3 with a range of 2,000 kilometers.

Inbar describes "noncontinuous progress" in Iran's missile project, which has "holes and gaps" but is backed by excessive propaganda. The missiles, he writes, are perceived as Iran's "vertical bypass," enabling it to beat Israel's advanced air defense (which precludes air attacks on its territory).

According to Inbar, "Iran takes advantage of its missile arsenal in order to leverage an image of power in the Middle East that is beyond its real ability to participate in dictating the regional agenda." Inbar believes that "Israel must provide a credible response to the threat of Iran's missiles."

In the absence of such a response, Inbar says, Israel's civilians are threatened, and the country's ability to act, militarily and politically, might suffer as a consequence.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1084834.html>

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Time

May. 13, 2009

Understanding Iran's Deterrence Game

By Robert Baer and Hossein Bastani

As it keeps making its case for an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, Israel isn't being very subtle: Iran will have a nuclear bomb, possibly as early as this year, its leaders suggest; Iran's leadership is suicidal — it will drop a nuclear bomb on Israel given the opportunity. So how, the Israelis then ask, can we not afford to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities, as we did Iraq's in 1981?

Such stark, simplistic logic appeals to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, but it skirts a couple of key questions about any such attack. For starters, would it actually succeed in putting a halt to Iran's nuclear program? Leadership at the Pentagon appears to think the answer is no. But what Israel and few others talk about, or not convincingly at least, is the other very risky unknown about such a strike: how exactly Iran would respond to it. Speculating a few weeks ago, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mike Mullen told the *Wall Street Journal* that Iran's ability to strike back "has not maxed out at all." Mullen doesn't offer specifics but leaves the impression that Iran will do what it has done in the past: small-scale attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Hizballah and Hamas rocketing of Israel. But as bad as that would be, what if Iran is preparing for a much broader response, even a full-fledged war?

In fact, that is exactly what Iran's hard-liners have in mind. Over the past five years, in public and in government documents, the hard-liners have established a doctrine of deterrence that calls for a disproportionate response against the U.S. and Israel in the event of any attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, no matter how limited. The doctrine stipulates that anything less than a large-scale response would risk the credibility of the Iranian regime — and its survival. And importantly, it does not draw a distinction between Israel and the U.S., if for no other reason than Israeli jets have to fly across U.S.-controlled Iraqi airspace to hit Iran.

Iran's deterrence doctrine is largely authored by the nation's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a wing of Iran's military charged with the protection of the regime. The doctrine is grounded in Iran's experience and study of four wars: the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88), Hizballah's war against Israel (1982-2000 and 2006), the Gulf War (1991) and the Iraq war (2003).

Iran's deterrence doctrine consists of four components:

1) The U.N., including the International Atomic Energy Agency, cannot deter an attack on Iran — no matter the degree of Iran's openness or compliance on nuclear inspections. Saddam Hussein cooperated with the U.N. and rid himself of weapons of mass destruction, but in the end it did nothing to stop a U.S. invasion. Submission to a strict U.N. monitoring regime will only serve to degrade Iran's national security.

2) Iran will fight the war against Israel and the U.S. outside Iran's border, and Iran alone must determine the area of operations. Saddam lost his country and his life because he chose to resist the U.S. within Iraq's borders. Iran will respond to an Israeli attack by attacking the U.S. and its allies in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Gaza, the West Bank and the Persian Gulf countries. Just as Iran makes clear with bellicose threats by President Ahmadinejad that it would destroy Israel if the U.S. launched an attack, it aims to deter an Israeli attack by stressing the price U.S. forces would have to pay in return.

3) The Iranian regime is capable of sustaining massive U.S. reprisal attacks without falling. In 1991 Saddam's army suffered a catastrophic defeat with the backbone of its army and air force destroyed and the loss of much of the southern part of the country to Shi'ite insurgents, but Saddam held on and remained in power. The Iranian regime believes it can weather the same degree of losses, especially as it has adequately prepared its populace for "martyrdom." As a result, it believes it is able to withstand much greater human and material losses than the U.S. A \$100-per-bbl. spike in the price of oil and a few thousand Americans dead, its thinking goes, will convince the U.S. to seek a truce.

4) It is well-prepared for a long, costly war. Iran learned how to fight an asymmetrical guerilla war in the 1982-2000 conflict in Lebanon, learning that lightly armed, small, mobile units can beat a larger enemy. Secondly, Iran knows it needs to eliminate any potential fifth column. Saddam's failure to destroy the Iraqi opposition, in particular the Kurdish groups in the north, called into doubt the Iraqi regime's legitimacy. It facilitated the notion that the Iraqi people had asked for a foreign invasion to deliver them from Saddam. Iran's crackdown on student dissidents, foreign journalists and dissident political movements should be viewed in this context.

Not all Iranians, of course, agree with the hard-liners' deterrence doctrine, but they do not have a voice in Iran's national security. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali Khamenei, the Revolutionary Guard and other hard-liners alone determine Iran's national-security policies. And as Israel and the U.S. calculate the cost of attacking Iran's nuclear facilities, they should realize that the decision makers inside Iran have no thought of a limited response.

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1897548,00.html>

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RIA Novosti
13 May 2009

Iran's Bushehr NPP No Threat to Its Neighbors - Experts

ABU DHABI (RIA Novosti) - The Bushehr nuclear power plant in southern Iran poses no threat to neighboring Arab countries, a Saudi newspaper reported on Wednesday following an Arab delegation visit to the facility.

According to Al-Hayat, a delegation of Persian Gulf countries visited Iran's first nuclear power plant last week to familiarize themselves with the work being carried out at the NPP.

Samir Al-Asfour, director of the radiology department at the Kuwaiti Health Ministry and an engineer by profession, told the paper that Iranian specialists working at the Bushehr NPP had explained the plant's operation and guaranteed the water treatment system posed no threat to the environment, including Persian Gulf waters.

The Iranian specialists assured the delegation that the reactor was safe and said there was no chance of radiation leaks, adding the plant was supervised by Russian experts, with Iran maintaining the reactor's operation, its safety and radiation monitoring, the paper said.

"The Iranian nuclear reactor is expected to be fully prepared for work in the first quarter of 2010," the Kuwaiti engineer said.

Al-Asfour said that there was no possibility of Persian Gulf Arab countries constructing any joint nuclear power plants in the next twenty five years.

The construction of the Bushehr plant was started in 1975 by German companies. However, German firms stopped work after a U.S. embargo was imposed on high technology supplies to Iran following the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the subsequent U.S. embassy siege in Tehran.

Russia signed a contract with Iran to complete the plant in February 1998 originally due for completion at the end of 2006. The date was postponed several times over financial problems and claims Russia was reluctant to finish the facility amid UN sanctions and suspicions of a covert nuclear weapons program.

The Islamic Republic insists it needs its nuclear program to provide civilian energy.

Russia's state nuclear power corporation Rosatom Sergei Kiriyenko announced in March that Russia had completed the construction of Iran's first nuclear power plant at Bushehr. The announcement was followed by a series of pre-launch tests at the facility.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20090513/121570484.html>

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Ha'aretz - Israel
14 May 2009

Obama Warns Netanyahu: Don't Surprise Me with Iran Strike

By Aluf Benn, Haaretz Correspondent

U.S. President Barack Obama has sent a message to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu demanding that Israel not surprise the U.S. with an Israeli military operation against Iran. The message was conveyed by a senior American official who met in Israel with Netanyahu, ministers and other senior officials. Earlier, Netanyahu's envoy visited Washington and met with National Security Adviser James Jones and with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and discussed the dialogue Obama has initiated with Tehran.

The message from the American envoy to the prime minister reveals U.S. concern that Israel could lose patience and act against Iran. It is important to the Americans that they not be caught off guard and find themselves facing facts on the ground at the last minute.

Obama did not wait for his White House meeting with Netanyahu, scheduled for next Monday, to deliver his message, but rather sent it ahead of time with his envoy.

It may be assumed that Obama is disturbed by the positions Netanyahu expressed before his election vis-a-vis Tehran - for example, Netanyahu's statement that "If elected I pledge that Iran will not attain nuclear arms, and that includes whatever is necessary for this statement to be carried out." After taking office, on Holocaust Memorial Day Netanyahu said: "We will not allow Holocaust-deniers to carry out another holocaust."

Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak do not oppose American dialogue with Tehran, but they believe it should be conducted within a limited window of time, making it clear to Iran that if it does not stop its nuclear program, severe sanctions will be imposed and other alternatives will be considered.

The American concern that Israel will attack Iran came up as early as last year, while president George W. Bush was still in office. As first reported in Haaretz, former prime minister Ehud Olmert and Barak made a number of requests from Bush during the latter's visit to Jerusalem, which were interpreted as preparations for an aerial attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Following the Bush visit to Jerusalem, about a year ago the previous administration sent two senior envoys, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen, and the former U.S. national intelligence chief Mike McConnell to demand that Israel not attack Iran.

The previous administration also gave the message greater weight through Mullen's public statement that an Israeli attack on Iran would endanger the entire region. Since that statement, Mullen has met a number of times with his Israeli counterpart, Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1085466.html>

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The Australian
May 15, 2009

US Tells Benjamin Netanyahu: No Raids on Iran Nuke Sites

John Lyons, Middle East correspondent

US President Barack Obama has sent a message to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu demanding that Israel not surprise the US with a military operation against Iran, according to reports yesterday in Israel.

The Haaretz newspaper said the message was conveyed by a senior American official who met Mr Netanyahu, ministers and other senior officials in Israel.

The emissary is believed to have been the head of the CIA, Leon Panetta. On the Israeli side the meeting was attended by the Prime Minister, Defence Minister Ehud Barak and key intelligence officials.

The paper said Mr Obama did not wait for his meeting in the White House next Monday with Mr Netanyahu to make his point - suggesting the US is worried Israel is making secret plans for an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

The newspaper said following a visit last year by then president George W. Bush to Jerusalem, the administration sent two envoys, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, and the former US national intelligence chief, Mike McConnell, to demand that Israel not attack Iran.

Before being elected Prime Minister in February, Mr Netanyahu made it clear that a military strike against Iran was an option for Israel, who would do "whatever is necessary" to prevent Iran gaining nuclear weapons.

Mr Netanyahu has been reluctant to make many public comments on any issue since becoming Prime Minister.

Instead, he has been focused on preparing a clear position to take to his meeting next week at the White House with Mr Obama and has not wanted to telegraph his message beforehand.

The two key issues to be discussed at the White House are the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Iran's nuclear program.

While the US appears to regard the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the priority for next week's meeting, the Israeli Government regards the Iranian issue as far more important.

On a recent tour of Europe, Israeli Foreign Minister, Avigdor Lieberman, repeatedly said Iran was the top priority not just for Israel but the entire Middle East.

However, even between Mr Netanyahu and Mr Lieberman, there are mixed messages about whether Israel would engage in an attack against Iran. Mr Lieberman said in an interview with an Austrian newspaper last month that a military response to try to stop Iran developing any nuclear program was not an option.

"We are not talking about a military attack," Mr Lieberman said. "Israel cannot resolve militarily the entire world's problem. I propose that the United States, as the largest power in the world, take responsibility for resolving the Iranian question."

Three weeks ago Israel's President Shimon Peres told US special envoy George Mitchell that it was "nonsense" any suggestion that Israel would strike against Iran.

But only days before that, Mr Peres had said that if diplomatic efforts by the Obama administration to convince Iran to cease its nuclear program or allow inspectors to monitor it faltered, then Israel may be forced to "strike" Iran.

Mr Peres, however, would not be a key figure in any decision about a military operation - that would be mainly Mr Netanyahu, Mr Barak and Mr Lieberman.

There are also mixed messages coming out of Washington about what Israel may be planning - General David Petraeus, the top US commander in the Middle East, told the US Senate's Armed Service Committee last month: "The Israeli Government may ultimately see itself so threatened by the prospect of an Iranian nuclear weapon that it would take pre-emptive military action to derail or delay it."

But about the same time US Defence Secretary Robert Gates told The Financial Times he did not think Israel would be planning a strike against Iran in coming months.

"I guess I would say I would be surprised if they did act this year," he said.

The report yesterday that Mr Obama has sent a message to the new Israeli government not to surprise his administration suggests the situation in Israel is fluid when it comes to Iran.

While there is a strong feeling in Israel that the US should be involved in any attack on Iran, there is a stronger sentiment that when it comes to the threat from Iran, widely described in Israel as "existential", that Israel must act alone if necessary to do whatever is in its own interests.

Late last year, in the final months of the Bush administration, Israel is known to have been seriously considering an air strike against some of Iran's nuclear research facilities - in an effort to set back the program five or so years.

It was revealed at the time that Israeli officials had sought logistical support from the US for such a strike, but that Mr Bush declined their request on the basis that there was already enough instability in the Middle East without a possible war between Israel and Iran.

Defence strategists in Israel say that any attack on Iran would not be like an air strike a year ago by Israel on a nuclear facility in Syria. Iran's military is far stronger than Syria's and, unlike Damascus, Tehran would almost certainly respond.

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25482299-2703,00.html>

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Press Trust of India
13 May 2009

‘US Works Very Closely with India on Pak’s Nuclear Security’

Lalit K Jha

Washington, May 13 (PTI) The US works "very closely" with India on the issue of Pakistan's nuclear security, an American think-tank said today.

"New Delhi is a key source of intelligence on the status of that security, and a good - albeit imperfect - measure of valid concern is the degree to which India is worried about it, since it stands the greatest risk of being targeted by Pakistan-based nukes," Texas-based think-tank Stratfor said.

"The United States works very closely with India on the issue of Pakistan's nuclear security," it said.

In its latest report released today, Stratfor said although India continues to underscore the threat it faces from Pakistan-based militants, it remains comfortable with Islamabad's nuclear command-and-control infrastructure.

"This would explain to a considerable degree the current US comfort level," it said.

With Islamabad trying to keep its system as opaque as possible, the think-tank said that this means the US has to rely on what it is hearing from Pakistan about control over its nuclear arsenals and on unilaterally obtaining information from third-party intelligence sources and intelligence-sharing with other countries, such as India. PTI

<http://www.ptinews.com/pti%5Cptisite.nsf/0/7D0F7E9FE8924796652575B500210F17?OpenDocument>

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Hindu – India
14 May 2009

US has no Plans to Seize Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons: Boucher

Islamabad (PTI): The United States has no plans to seize Pakistan's nuclear weapons, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher has said.

Mr. Boucher rejected the suggestion that once the Taliban were defeated, the US would turn its attention to Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

"I think it is silly. Nobody has any basis to make a claim like that," Mr. Boucher told *Dawn* newspaper. The US, he said, believed Pakistan is capable of defending the nuclear weapons against any move to seize them.

Mr. Boucher said the US wants a constructive, long-term engagement with Pakistan that goes beyond America's need to defeat the terrorists responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

He said the US believed "Pakistan has a very capable" army which could defeat the Taliban in Swat and other areas.

"But it needs counter-insurgency training, particularly to learn how to keep an area once the militants are cleared," he said.

<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/003200905141480.htm>

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Washington Post

May 12, 2009

Italy Accuses Two of Leading Role in al Qaeda

By Antonella Cinelli

ROME (Reuters) - Italian prosecutors have accused two men, arrested last year for links to trafficking in illegal immigrants, of being leading al Qaeda figures in Europe involved in training militants for suicide attacks.

Police in the southern city of Bari said on Tuesday the two men, identified as Syrian imam Bassam Ayachi and French computer engineer Raphael Gendron, played a leading role in "communication, transmission and propaganda" for al Qaeda.

They were arrested by Italian police in November 2008 on suspicion of trying to smuggle five illegal immigrants into Italy. Among the documents found on them was the will of a would-be suicide attacker, detailing the compensation to his family after his death, police said.

Prosecutors issued new arrest warrants accusing the two of criminal association linked to international terrorism.

"We are extremely satisfied to have stopped the masterminds, the heads of the organization, the people who educated would-be suicide attackers in the name of Jihad," said Stanislao Chimera, head of the Digos anti-terrorist squad in Bari.

Documents found in their possession mentioned attacks in France and Britain, "but as a mere possibility, without anything concrete or any immediate threat," Claudio Galzerano of Ucigos, another police anti-terrorism unit, told Reuters.

Tapped conversations between the two men in prison referred to an attack on Paris Charles de Gaulle airport, without giving precise details, prosecutors in Bari said.

French Interior Minister Michele Alliot-Marie said "we don't have any information that would allow us to seriously consider the threat of an attack on (the airport)."

"The individuals in question are known for their propaganda and recruitment operation, and for belonging to networks," she told the French parliament.

A French anti-terrorism official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the two men were suspected of being involved with Afghan and Iraqi networks aimed at sending insurgents to France and Britain.

Both men are known for their involvement in the Islamist movement, the official said.

Ayachi's son and Gendron, who has been resident in Belgium for some time, were found guilty in January 2009 by the European Court in Brussels of inciting hatred and violence against Jews.

They were fined 2,000 euro and sentenced to a month in jail. The two men used to run an Islamic Belgian Internet site.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/12/AR2009051202148.html>

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London Daily Telegraph
12 May 2009

Al-Qaeda Suspects 'Plotted Attack on Britain' from Behind Bars

By Nick Squires in Rome and Duncan Gardham

During wiretapped conversations the men discussed an attack on Charles De Gaulle airport outside Paris and spoke of the need to "strike at the British", Italian police said.

Bassam Ayachi, 62, a Syrian imam with French citizenship, and Raphael Frederic Gendron, 33, a Frenchman who converted to Islam, were allegedly part of an al-Qaeda cell operating in Europe.

They have been in prison in Bari, a port town in southern Italy, since November, when they were arrested on suspicion of smuggling five illegal immigrants into Italy aboard a camping trailer.

Ayachi is a well-known extremist preacher based in Belgium and mentor to Malika el-Aroud, a leading female figure in al-Qaeda whose first husband was killed in an attack against Ahmed Shah Massoud, then leader of the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance.

El-Aroud was arrested in Belgium a month after Ayachi and accused of planning a suicide attack while Prime Minister Gordon Brown was attending a meeting of European leaders in Brussels.

Italian officers placed a listening device in the cell shared by Ayachi and Gendron.

In one bugged conversation, the pair discussed "striking the British" and launching a Sept 11-style attack using an aircraft, although the target was not specified.

"They are key figures in al-Qaeda's European organisation," said Giorgio Manari, the chief of police in Bari. The wiretap evidence had enabled investigators to "nip the plot in the bud", he said.

The men were served warrants charging them with criminal association linked to international terrorism and will remain in custody.

They were also suspected of recruiting militants for suicide attacks in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Police said the pair had for years lived in Belgium, where Bassam was an imam at an extremist Islamic centre and one of al-Qaeda's "spiritual guides", while Gendron, a computer expert, was the "media propaganda point man, via the internet, for the French-speaking community."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/5314517/Al-Qaeda-suspects-plotted-attack-on-Britain-from-behind-bars.html>

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Washington Post
May 12, 2009

Detainee Who Gave False Iraq Data Dies In Prison in Libya

By Peter Finn

A former CIA high-value detainee, who provided bogus information that was cited by the Bush administration in the run-up to the Iraq war, has died in a Libyan prison, an apparent suicide, according to a Libyan newspaper.

A researcher for Human Rights Watch, who met Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi at the Abu Salim prison in Tripoli late last month, said a contact in Libya had confirmed the death.

Libi was captured fleeing Afghanistan in late 2001, and he vanished into the secret detention system run by the Bush administration. He became the unnamed source, according to Senate investigators, behind Bush administration claims in 2002 and 2003 that Iraq had provided training in chemical and biological weapons to al-Qaeda operatives. The claim was most famously delivered by then-Secretary of State Colin L. Powell in his address to the United Nations in February 2003.

Powell later called the speech a "blot" on his record, saying he was not given all available intelligence and analysis within the government. The Defense Intelligence Agency and some analysts at the CIA had questioned the veracity of Libi's testimony, which was obtained after the prisoner was transferred to Egyptian custody for questioning by the CIA, according to Senate investigators.

In their book "Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War," Michael Isikoff and David Corn said Libi made up the story about Iraqi training after he was beaten and subjected to a "mock burial" by his Egyptian interrogators, who put him in a cramped box for 17 hours. Libi recanted the story after being returned to CIA custody in 2004.

When President George W. Bush ordered the 2006 transfer to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, of high-value detainees previously held in CIA custody, Libi was pointedly missing. Human rights groups had long suspected that Libi was instead transferred to Libya, but the CIA had never confirmed where he was sent.

"I would speculate that he was missing because he was such an embarrassment to the Bush administration," said Tom Malinowski, the head of the Washington office of Human Rights Watch. "He was Exhibit A in the narrative that tortured confessions contributed to the massive intelligence failure that preceded the Iraq war."

The first independent confirmation of Libi's whereabouts came two weeks ago. Heba Morayef, a researcher for Human Rights Watch, said she and a colleague met him briefly in a courtyard at the Abu Salim prison on April 27. The two were there to examine the treatment of prisoners in Libya, including other detainees once held by the United States.

Libi angrily rejected speaking to the researchers, saying, "Where were you when I was being tortured in American prisons?" according to Morayef, who described the encounter in a phone interview.

The Libyan newspaper Oed reported Sunday that Libi was found dead in his cell after killing himself, but added that friends of the 46-year-old former preacher, who ran a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, questioned the alleged cause of death.

The Libyan government has not confirmed the death, and the Libyan Embassy in Washington said it had no information. The CIA also declined to comment.

Human Rights Watch called for an independent investigation of the death.

Libi was among dozens of former "ghost prisoners" who were in American custody overseas but whose disposition has never been officially released, according to human rights groups and a recently leaked report by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Most of these former detainees are believed to have been returned to their home countries, including to states such as Syria.

The Obama administration recently announced that it was decommissioning the CIA's global network of secret prisons, which have been mothballed since 2006, but human rights activists say the U.S. government should still provide the ICRC with an accounting of where it sent every prisoner it once held.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/11/AR2009051103412.html?hpid=moreheadlines>

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World Tribune
May 12, 2009

China has Developed Its Own Operating System for Cyber War with U.S.

A leading cyber security specialist said last week that China has developed its own ultra-secure operating system for a strategic edge in its cyber warfare with U.S. computer systems.

Kevin G. Coleman, a specialist with the Technolytics Institute and consultant to the office of the Director of National Intelligence, said in congressional testimony that the United States is woefully unprepared to counter cyber attacks on its electronic infrastructures.

Part of the cyber arms race includes China's creation of Kylin, a new "hardened" operating system. It began converting systems to it in 2007, according to the current edition of East-Asia-Intel.com.

"China's military strategists view our dependence on space assets and information technology as 'soft ribs' and a strategic weakness," Coleman told the U.S.-China Economic Security Review Commission.

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

Coleman said he recently planned to meet Chinese counterparts involved in electronic research, including the co-author of the alarming book, "Unrestricted Warfare" in which co-author Wang Xiangsui advocated all methods, including terrorism, to win future conflicts. However, China's government blocked the meeting, due to their concerns about him.

Coleman also said the meeting was cancelled amid reports of Chinese scanning of the U.S. power grid and the discovery of a Chinese cyber spying network in 103 countries.

"It is my belief that this threat is real and we must take a proactive posture on acts of cyber aggression and espionage," he said. "For over two decades, China has been attempting to do what the Soviet Union never accomplished — covertly acquire Western technology, then use it to move ahead of the West."

Coleman said cyber spying is a serious and evolving threat "that requires immediate attention." One academic study concluded that sophisticated computer attacks have been "devastatingly effective" and that "few organizations, outside the defense and intelligence sector, could withstand such an attack," he said.

Coleman also noted that the U.S. government has been unable to determine when a cyber attack constitutes an act of war.

http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2009/ea_china0377_05_12.asp

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Washington Post
May 13, 2009

Obama Aides Debate Role of Proposed Cyber Czar

By Ellen Nakashima and Spencer S. Hsu, Washington Post Staff Writers

The nation's top military, intelligence and homeland security officials are recommending that President Obama establish a new White House cyber czar under the National Security Council with broad policy-setting authority for protecting both public- and private-sector computer networks, according to sources familiar with the discussions.

Other top administration officials, at a Friday meeting of Cabinet members and other presidential advisers, argued that the new official -- a deputy assistant to the president -- should also report to the National Economic Council, said sources familiar with the discussions.

In recent weeks, White House economic adviser Lawrence H. Summers and others have expressed concern that security measures not unduly threaten economic growth and other national interests. Obama aides concluded at the meeting that the new official's role would be limited to security and not broader cyber policy issues, such as tax or antitrust matters.

The debate caps a comprehensive review initiated by Obama of the U.S. government's cyber policies and programs. The varied options are now being put before Obama, who will make the final decision about the scope and authority of the new official's role, according to the sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss an internal policy matter. A decision could come as early as next week, sources said.

As a candidate last year, Obama pledged to "appoint a national cyber adviser who will report directly to me." In fact, the review has prompted vigorous debate over how much power to give the position, whether measured by closeness to the president, staff, budget authority or ability to reach into the operations of government departments and the private sector.

Security officials have cited the threat to national security posed by the mounting capabilities of criminal, terrorist or potentially state-supported hackers in countries such as Russia and China.

"The United States must treat cybersecurity as one of the most important national security challenges it faces," stated a report issued in December by a commission formed by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The report recommended that the president appoint an assistant and set up a National Office for Cyberspace to oversee the intelligence community's and Homeland Security Department's cyber operations.

James A. Lewis, who directed the CSIS project, said the recommendation to name a deputy assistant to the president appears "to match the broad outlines" of the commission's report, but it depends on what's in "the rest of the package."

"The bottom line is, whatever title this person has, if they don't have real authority, then they will not be effective," said Richard A. Clarke, a security adviser to the administrations of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

Turf fights have complicated the review, which was supposed to last 60 days but just hit the three-month mark. The sides were evident at Friday's meeting, which was chaired by Summers, national security adviser James L. Jones and his deputy, John O. Brennan, representing White House economic, national security and homeland security councils.

Several sources said Director of National Intelligence Dennis C. Blair argued that the cyber official should report to Jones. That view was backed by Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano; and Energy Secretary Steven Chu, one source said.

A senior White House official said anyone criticizing the cyber coordinator's rank "misses a much broader understanding of the question -- namely that this person would be doing work of immense interest . . . to the president himself."

Clarke said yesterday that if the White House fails to give the cyber adviser authority through the Office of Management and Budget over federal budgets and through the National Economic Council to work with the private sector, "I don't think it's going to get very far."

Obama has to ask "some tough questions," Clarke said, "because this is a growing issue, of growing importance, and we have to get it right."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2009/05/12/ST2009051203081.html>

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San Antonio Express
15 May 2009

San Antonio to get AF Cyber Command

By Gary Martin- Express-News

WASHINGTON — Lackland AFB in San Antonio is being selected by Air Force officials as the headquarters for a new cyber command, an official close to the selection process said late Thursday.

The Air Force is expected to make the selection official today, but lawmakers representing states and cities with potential sites were being notified in advance of the announcement.

Lackland was selected by the Air Force as the best of several other candidates for the headquarters, which would mean an influx of infrastructure, security and 400 staffers.

The headquarters will include the commander's staff and an operations center.

The operations primarily will focus on defending Air Force computers against cyber attack and preventing computer disruptions.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, said selecting Lackland was "great news for San Antonio."

Hutchison said Lackland "and its dedicated military personnel have the unique and varied attributes that made it the obvious choice."

Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff said he was surprised to hear Lackland was selected, because a Louisiana site was considered the front-runner.

“This is a good surprise,” Wolff said, adding that it comes on the heels of last week's announcement that Medtronic Diabetes Therapy Management and Education Center is moving to San Antonio and will hire 1,400 workers over five years.

The selected site for the cyber command now must undergo an environmental impact assessment.

A final announcement of where to place the command will come later this summer, after the assessment is conducted, said Carla Pampe, a spokeswoman for the command in Louisiana.

Alternative sites also will be announced, should the finalist site be eliminated by the environmental impact assessment.

The temporary location of the command is at Barksdale AFB in Shreveport, La. The Louisiana base was one of six finalists.

Other potential sites were Langley AFB, Va.; Offut AFB, Neb.; Peterson AFB, Colo.; and Scott AFB, Ill.

Hutchison and Rep. Charlie Gonzalez, D-San Antonio, led efforts to sway Air Force officials to locate the command at Lackland, where existing missions are located.

When Lackland was named a finalist in January, Gonzalez said the Air Force base was “well-positioned” to get the command because of existing work there.

Lackland is home to the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Agency, the Cryptologic Systems Group, the 67th Network Warfare Wing, the Information Operation Center and the Joint Operation Warfare Command.

In addition, the University of Texas at San Antonio has cyber-related research, and the National Security Agency's Texas Cryptologic Center is in San Antonio.

Wolff said landing the command at Lackland also would boost local efforts to get “more jobs here with NSA.”

“This is a positive step toward that effort,” Wolff said.

Rep. Ciro Rodriguez agreed, saying, “The Air Force cyber center is a major component of security, but it also will have some other components for the private sector, which will trigger other forms of jobs.”

Rodriguez, D-San Antonio, said the command would be a “a good incubator” for business.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, and the entire Texas congressional delegation signed onto a letter urging the Air Force to put the command in San Antonio.

And Hutchison, the ranking Republican on the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on military construction and military affairs, touted San Antonio as the location for the center in a March meeting with Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz.

In the selection process, the Air Force considered factors that included existing cyber activities, network capabilities, infrastructure and security.

San Antonio demonstrated it had the networks and infrastructure to become a national center for cyber security, Hutchison said.

Hutchison said she would work with Congress, the Air Force and San Antonio leaders to “ensure a smooth and efficient transition process so we can stand up this critical new command as quickly as possible.”

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/military/45051917.html>

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Washington Times

OPINION

May 12, 2009

Al Qaeda No. 2 Hiding in Quetta

By Jasmeen Manzoor

Ayman al-Zawahiri, al Qaeda's No. 2 leader, the most wanted terrorist after Osama bin Laden, with a \$25 million bounty on his head, is holed up near Quetta, Pakistan, according to a highly placed Pakistani intelligence source.

The Egyptian-born radical is a master of disguise, a meticulous planner and the deadliest of terrorists. Yet Pakistani intelligence sources say he roams openly and with impunity in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan. While Predators continue to strike at a variety of key terror targets in that area, our source tells us that the CIA and other intelligence agencies cannot get al-Zawahiri, though they usually know for the most part where he is.

Al-Zawahiri's recent movements can be tracked with some specificity. He was positively identified in the North Waziristan Agency of Pakistan in June 2008, and the locations pinpointed where he conducted high-level meetings.

Subsequent U.S. drone attacks forced him to move to South Waziristan Agency in August 2008. Thereafter he moved south to Baluchistan and crossed into Afghanistan from the border city of Zhob. He returned to the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) sometime in December or January. A well-placed source in Pakistan's intelligence service tells me that he may have relocated recently to somewhere outside of Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan.

Al-Zawahiri hides in plain sight. He has given up the trappings of a high-value target, has no large entourage and dresses in the manner of the people in the areas in which he resides. He moves his wives frequently to preclude any identification by that means.

He does not trust locals and is protected by a security force of trusted Egyptians. However, quite a few old veterans of the conflict in Afghanistan recognize him as he moves about the area.

Pakistani intelligence agencies have shared with the CIA their knowledge of al-Zawahiri's location in the Quetta suburbs.

But the No. 2 most wanted man in the world is still roaming free.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/12/al-qaeda-no-2-hiding-in-quetta/>

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Wall Street Journal
May 13, 2009

The Nuclear Realists

A bipartisan Congressional commission on U.S. nuclear strategy released its report last week, and it deserved more attention than it got. It delivered a candid message that not many want to hear: We're a long way from a nuclear-free world.

Led by former Defense Secretaries William Perry and James Schlesinger, the commission is blunt on this point: "The conditions that might make possible the global elimination of nuclear weapons are not present today and their creation would require a fundamental transformation of the world political order." Until then, the report says, the U.S. must have a strong and credible nuclear deterrent.

To do so, the U.S. must maintain its triad of nuclear-delivery systems -- bombers, missiles and submarines -- a course of action that will require some "difficult investment choices." It also calls for modernization of the U.S. nuclear stockpile and the "transformation" of the aging physical and intellectual capital of the national nuclear laboratories.

The commission doesn't directly endorse the now-canceled Reliable Replacement Warhead program -- a political hot potato that President Obama rejects and Defense Secretary Robert Gates supports. But it does so indirectly by countering two of the arguments against it -- that it might lead to the need for nuclear testing and that it might undermine U.S. credibility on nonproliferation. The commission finds both risks to be minimal.

The commission warns that "we may be close to a tipping point" as more countries seek to go nuclear, in part because they may not have confidence in the reliability of U.S. nuclear weapons or that the U.S. would be willing to use them. It supports a "strengthening" of the international treaty system, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, as well as nontreaty efforts such as the Proliferation Security Initiative. It also endorses a strong missile defense -- including against more "complex" threats, such as technologies that help incoming missiles penetrate U.S. defenses. It couldn't reach a consensus on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which Mr. Obama wants the Senate to ratify.

The commission's recommendations provide a welcome dose of nuclear realism. The Administration and Congress ignore them at the nation's peril.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124217073493612717.html>

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Reuters India

May 14, 2009

OPINION

ANALYSIS-Loose Nukes in Pakistan: How Real is the Risk?

By Andrew Marshall, Asia Political Risk Correspondent

SINGAPORE, May 14 (Reuters) - The doomsday scenario of militants allied to al Qaeda gaining control of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal has only a vanishingly small possibility of ever happening. But the more realistic risks are scary enough.

Analysts say that while the Taliban has almost no chance of ever being in a position to launch a nuclear warhead, there is a real danger militants could exploit chaos in Pakistan to hijack or steal enough radioactive material to build the kind of device long feared by counterterrorist officials -- a dirty bomb. U.S. and allied officials have expressed mounting concern over what would happen to Pakistan's warheads if the country lurched further into chaos and the Taliban came closer to seizing power.

"The collapse of Pakistan, al Qaeda acquiring nuclear weapons, an extremist takeover -- that would dwarf everything we've seen in the war on terror," David Kilcullen, an Australian anti-insurgency expert and adviser to U.S. Central Command chief General David Petraeus, warned earlier this year.

But most analysts say the Taliban is nowhere near able to mount a serious power grab across Pakistan. And even if they seized an area where warheads were stored, the nuclear command system would make it almost impossible to launch one.

"I don't think there is any risk whatsoever of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of dangerous radical Islamic elements for the foreseeable future," said Alastair Newton, senior political analyst at Nomura in London.

RISK SCENARIOS

Mark Fitzpatrick, director of the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Programme at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, said the military was "the one institution that actually works well in Pakistan" and would step in if necessary to prevent the country sliding into chaos.

Maria Kuusisto, analyst at Eurasia Group in London, said nuclear security had improved significantly since 2001.

"To hijack a nuclear weapon in a conventional way, either stealing it or getting access to the nuclear command, is going to be very difficult," Kuusisto said. "There are concerns, but the concerns are more nuanced than the headlines would suggest."

Two scenarios are particularly worrying, analysts say.

If the Taliban encroached close to an area where warheads are stored, the military may feel it needs to try to move them -- and the convoy could be vulnerable to capture.

"The Pakistani military say their procedures for moving nuclear weapons are very well thought out, but that is always a weak point, moving your nuclear assets," Kuusisto said.

The second, and likelier, scenario would be that despite the vetting procedures in place, Taliban or al Qaeda sympathisers managed to get employed in a nuclear facility and were able to steal enriched uranium or other radioactive material.

Vetting of personnel can never be foolproof.

"What chills me is that the military says personnel assigned to sensitive nuclear facilities are all vetted by the Pakistan intelligence service," said Steve Vickers, president and chief executive of FTI-International Risk and a former head of criminal intelligence for the Hong Kong police.

"I don't think anyone would say Pakistan's nuclear weapons are 100 percent secure," Vickers said. The ISI intelligence service was instrumental in creating the Taliban and is widely thought to contain factions sympathetic to militants.

Fitzpatrick of the IISS non-proliferation programme said the risk of theft of fissile material was the biggest worry in Pakistan. "It is certainly conceivable," he said.

Analysts noted that Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan had played a key role in the transfer of nuclear technology to rogue states. Khan was freed from house arrest in February by the current government and is widely viewed as a national hero.

DIRTY BOMB

Al Qaeda is known to be actively seeking nuclear material. Pakistan could be the place they finally manage to acquire some.

"It's not going to be a risk where rogue elements take over Pakistan's nuclear assets and then launch them at India or launch them at the U.S.," Kuusisto said. "It will be a radiological bomb exploding somewhere that is traced back to Pakistan."

The United States has given Pakistan assistance in checking containers leaving from key ports for radioactive material. But Vickers said smuggling radioactive material out of the country would not present a major problem for militants.

"It is very difficult to secure the borders," he said.

Kuusisto noted Pakistan is a key transit point in the international drugs trade. "If heroin can flow out I am not too convinced that nuclear material cannot flow out," she said. "There are plenty of land routes, there are plenty of options."

A dirty bomb does not require major technical know-how -- essentially it is a conventional bomb with radioactive material added so that besides the damage from the blast, a large area is also contaminated by potentially deadly radiation.

Several analyses suggest it would be difficult to build a dirty bomb radioactive enough to cause a large number of deaths.

But it is a weapon that could cause huge disruption due to the potential of long-term contamination -- particularly if it was used to target a key node in the highly interconnected modern global economy, such as a key port or major financial district.

And even the announcement a militant group had acquired fissile material could cause widespread panic and disruption.

"The major threat from terrorism stems from the risk of one or more major attacks on fragile nodes in the international system with large conflation effects," the World Economic Forum said in an analysis of the top global risks.

"Over the longer term, there is a moderate risk of such an event, with very high human, political and economic consequences.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idINSP47468320090514?sp=true>

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Japan Times

OPINION

May 14, 2009

Military Insiders Threaten Pakistan's Nuclear Assets

By BRAHMA CHELLANEY

DELHI — Without naming the United States as his source, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said recently: "We have been assured that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are in safe hands as of now. And I have no reason to disbelieve the assurance."

To his acute embarrassment, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, soon thereafter, said the "unthinkable" could happen in Pakistan: Islamists could get "the keys to the nuclear arsenal." Which raises the question: Does America have a contingency plan to avert an Islamist takeover of Pakistan's "crown jewels" and, if so, can it work?

Pakistan's nuclear-stockpile security is handled by the Strategic Plans Division, which has under its command a special unit of about 1,000 troops. But as Clinton acknowledged, the Pakistani nukes are "widely dispersed," with storage sites extending beyond the Punjab heartland to Sind and Baluchistan provinces.

The U.S. appears to have few good options to pre-emptively seize the nuclear arms if a national meltdown is imminent.

To be sure, the Strategic Plans Division — the keeper of the country's nuclear keys — is headed by a U.S.-backed general, Khalid Kidwai, who was held in India as a prisoner of the 1971 war and released after the 1972 Simla Agreement on normalizing India-Pakistan relations. Kidwai has headed the SPD ever since it was created after the 1998 nuclear tests. In other words, it was on Kidwai's watch that the infamous A.Q. Khan-led nuclear-smuggling ring remained in operation.

Yet for Washington, Kidwai is a trusted man. It was Kidwai whom military ruler Pervez Musharraf used to extract a tutored confession from Khan so that the entire blame for the illicit nuclear ring could fall on a single individual, sparing the military establishment — a charade the Bush administration readily went along with.

To tamp down growing international concerns over the safety of Pakistan's nuclear assets, U.S. President Barack Obama said on April 29: "I'm confident we can make sure that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is secure, primarily, initially, because the Pakistani Army, I think, recognizes the hazards of those weapons falling into the wrong hands."

Obama's confidence, amazingly, is rooted in his belief that the jihadist-infiltrated Pakistani Army is taking cognizance of such perils. Indeed, by suggesting that Washington continued to trust the Pakistani Army with custodial control of nuclear assets, Obama only compounded the insult he simultaneously hurled at President Asif Ali Zardari's elected government in calling it "very fragile," ineffectual and unable "to gain the support and loyalty" of the Pakistani people.

Obama's comments, made just before he received Zardari and Afghan President Hamid Karzai for a trilateral meeting, highlighted a long-standing U.S. policy partiality for Pakistani military generals, even though the real Islamist-takeover threat today comes from within the increasingly radicalized Pakistani Army.

Rather than help build robust civilian institutions, Washington propped up military rulers for five decades and still continues to pamper the Pakistani military establishment, best illustrated by the proposed \$3 billion in fresh military aid over the next five years and the setting up of new cooperation between the CIA and the rogue Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency.

The choice in Pakistan is not between Islamists and U.S.-sponsored generals, who actually reared the forces of jihad and still nurture many jihadists. Both are a threat to international peace and security. But even as Obama is making Pakistan the biggest recipient of U.S. aid in the world, his harsh criticism of Zardari — in office for just eight months — risks undermining a fledgling civilian government and emboldening the military. Zardari is right in saying that a military coup in Pakistan, as in the past, can occur only with U.S. support, however tacit.

Pakistan's descent into a jihadist dungeon tellingly occurred not under civilian rule but under military rule. While one military dictator, General Zia ul-Haq, let loose the jihadists he reared, another dictator, Musharraf, pushed Pakistan to the very edge of the precipice. Before Musharraf's nearly nine-year rule, few in the world looked at Pakistan as a failing state. How can Pakistan become a "normal" state if its military, intelligence and nuclear establishments remain outside civilian oversight?

Yet when the new civilian government ordered the ISI last July to report to the Interior Ministry, it did not receive support from Washington, allowing the army to quickly frustrate the move. The command and control over Pakistan's nuclear weapons rest with the army chief, Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, as Zardari is just the titular chair of the National Command Authority dominated by military and intelligence leaders. In such an anomalous setting, can the U.S. really prevent jihadist control of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal?

The U.S. first allowed Pakistan to acquire the nuclear bomb by turning a blind eye to its illicit procurement of blueprints and items from overseas. Then, when the clandestine nuclear importers in Pakistan morphed into covert nuclear exporters, the U.S. failed to detect their proliferation activities for 16 long years. Worse still, Washington has not been interested in fully investigating the very network it helped uncover or in bringing its ringleaders to justice. As a result, international investigations into that ring have collapsed and even A.Q. Khan has been freed from house arrest.

Khan's discharge followed Switzerland's release of the two Tinner brothers, who along with their father were important conduits in the Pakistani ring. One of the brothers, Urs Tinner, has acknowledged working undercover for the CIA. In fact, the CIA shielded A.Q. Khan for a long time. As former Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers has revealed, the CIA protected Khan from arrest and prosecution in Europe in 1975 and 1986.

Today, even as Obama seeks to assure the world about Pakistani-nuclear security, his aides admit Washington does not know where all of Pakistan's storage sites are located. Pakistani officials have doggedly deflected U.S. requests for these details.

Although the U.S. has provided some \$100 million worth of technical assistance to Islamabad under its International Nuclear Materials Protection and Cooperation program, American personnel have been denied access to most Pakistani nuclear sites, even when they have made a case for on-site installation and training.

The U.S. has been loath to sell Pakistan "Permissive Action Links" (PALs) — electronic locks embedded in weapon design that have special access codes. But it has helped Pakistan design a system of controls, barriers and sensors, including improvised electronic-locking devices added to already-built weapons. But rather than let Americans enter its sites, Pakistan sent its personnel for on-site training in the U.S. on intrusion detectors, portal monitors, locks and material-accounting equipment. Put simply, the U.S. has not been allowed to see how its money has been spent.

In any event, modern security and accounting systems can be of little value in the face of insider threats. The real threat of an Islamist takeover of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal comes not from jihadists outside, but from jihadists within the system — specifically, from the jihadist-penetrated military, intelligence and nuclear establishments.

Yet, with the Obama administration hyping the Pakistani Taliban threat to win early congressional passage of record-level aid for Islamabad, international concerns have centered on outsider threats. The Taliban, either in Pakistan or Afghanistan, have not been active outside Pashtun areas, and there is no evidence of any nuclear assets being present in the troubled Pashtun parts.

Pakistan has emulated India's example in storing nukes in disassembled form, with the warheads and delivery vehicles stowed in separate facilities. For outsiders to acquire even one complete bomb, capture of at least two facilities would be necessary, along with the expertise to mate the fissile "core" and trigger with the delivery vehicle. This is unlikely to happen without military generals and other senior insiders actively colluding with the outsiders.

Insider threats indeed have repeatedly been exposed — from the ring that sold centrifuge technology and bomb designs to the jihadist charity set up by two senior nuclear scientists, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Abdul Majeed. Mahmood, who once served as A.Q. Khan's boss and designed the Khushab reactor, advocated that the Pakistani nukes were the property of the whole *ummah*, or Islamic world, and Pakistan had a duty to share nuclear technology with other Muslim states.

Then CIA chief George Tenet writes in his 2007 book, "At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA," that President George W. Bush was so concerned by the charity's activities that he directed him to fly to Islamabad. The charity was shut down and Mahmood detained.

Programs to screen and monitor personnel can achieve little when jihad-spouting personnel abound in the Pakistani military and nuclear establishments. Such personnel can serve as sleepers for extremist groups.

Safeguarding Pakistani nuclear assets from jihadists demands the creation of a stable, moderate Pakistan. That, in turn, demands sustained international political investment in building and strengthening civilian institutions. But can that happen without a fundamental break from U.S. policies that continue to prop up a meddling army, fatten the ISI and encourage the military, intelligence and nuclear establishments to stay not accountable to the elected government?

If U.S. policy remains driven by political expediency and near-term objectives, an Islamist takeover of Pakistan could result from one of two scenarios: a collapse of central authority or, more likely, an intramilitary struggle in which the jihadists gain ascendancy.

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