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HSToday.com
November 7, 2008

GAO Outlines Critical Homeland Security Priorities for Obama Administration

by Anthony L. Kimery

Defense readiness and spending; food safety; preparing for large-scale health emergencies; and homeland security are among a list of 13 "urgent issues" the Government Accountability Office (GAO) "has identified as among those needing the attention of President-elect [Barack] Obama and the 111th Congress during the transition and the first year of the new administration and Congress," Acting Comptroller General, Gene Dodaro, said Thursday. The list of 13 "urgent issues" GAO identified that "require urgent attention and continuing oversight to ensure the nation's security and well-being" is based on Congress' investigative arm's recent federal oversight work. "With the serious challenges related to financial markets and the economy, the financial crisis facing the nation, two wars under way, and the first transition since 9/11 and the creation of a Department of Homeland Security, this is absolutely a unique time," Dodaro said.

"GAO has combed through all of our recent work to help identify where our work can help address urgent challenges facing the nation now, to assist new appointees in every agency zero in on the challenges of that particular agency, and to help identify areas with the potential to save the nation billions of dollars," Dodaro said. A new website GAO launched Thursday was designed not only to help make the transition an informed and smooth one across the federal government, but "to find information since this is a period when appointees have limited time to learn about their new positions and the challenges that come with making a successful transition from campaigning to governing," a GAO statement released Thursday said. Other "urgent policy concerns" that "are critical and time sensitive and require prioritized federal action" include US efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and undisciplined defense spending, GAO stated. With regard to homeland security, GAO said "the new administration and Congress should work to further strengthen [Department of Homeland Security] operations and address critical issues that, as GAO has reported, affect the nation's security and preparedness.

Issues of immediate concern to GAO on the homeland security front are:

- Coordinating with federal, state and local governments, and private sector partners to prevent, prepare for, and respond to acts of terrorism and other disasters;
- Strengthening the protection and resiliency of the nation's cyber and other critical infrastructure, including the banking and finance, transportation, and energy sectors, against acts of terrorism and natural disasters;
- More aggressively pursuing the development and deployment of nuclear, biological, chemical, and radiological detection capabilities and other countermeasures to address emerging threats;
- Strengthening key multibillion-dollar homeland security acquisitions to ensure that needed security capabilities are delivered at acceptable levels of cost and risk;
- Improving the sharing of intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security information between federal, state, local, private sector, and international partners to assist in the successful prevention, response, and recovery from terrorist and natural disasters.

- GAO also says food security and safety is an issue the new administration and Congress needs to quickly address.

Lisa R. Shames, director of Natural Resources and Environment at GAO, said “the fragmented nature of the federal food oversight system undermines the government’s ability to:”

- Plan more strategically to inspect food production processes;
- Identify and react more quickly to outbreaks of food-borne illnesses; and
- Focus on promoting the safety and integrity of the nation’s food supply.

- “Revamping the oversight of food safety is especially critical in light of the global food supply,” GAO stressed, noting that “about 15 percent of the overall US food supply is imported, as is 60 percent of fresh fruits and vegetables and 75 percent of seafood. In addition, shifting demographics means that more of the US population—including older adults, young children, pregnant women, and immune-compromised individuals—is increasingly susceptible to food-borne illnesses.”

GAO said “the President should reconvene the President’s Council on Food Safety or create another forum in the short term. In the longer term, the President should consider alternative structures for oversight of food safety to facilitate interagency coordination on food safety regulations and programs.” Additionally, “the executive branch should develop a governmentwide performance plan that is results-oriented and provides a cross-agency perspective to help ensure agencies’ goals are complementary and to help decision makers balance trade-offs when resource allocation and restructuring decisions are made.” Lastly, GAO said “Congress should commission the National Academy of Sciences or a blue ribbon panel to conduct a detailed analysis of alternative organizational food safety structures,” and “should enact comprehensive, uniform, and risk-based food safety legislation.”

When it comes to strengthening preparedness for large-scale public health emergencies, GAO said “federal agencies ... continue to face challenges in working with one another and with state and local governments, private organizations, and international partners to:

- Establish clearer federal leadership roles;
- Coordinate response efforts to identify and assess the magnitude of threats;
- Develop effective countermeasures, such as vaccines;
- Marshal the resources required for an effective public health response, such as developing health system surge capacity to handle large numbers of casualties; and
- Provide for increased interaction between the federal government and other partners over which groups will play important roles in response to public health emergencies.

- GAO said “DHS and [the Department of Health and Human Services [HHS] should work together to develop and conduct rigorous testing, training, and exercises for pandemic influenza to ensure that federal leadership roles are clearly defined and understood and that leaders are able to effectively execute shared responsibilities to address emerging challenges, and then ensure that these roles are clearly understood by state, local, and tribal governments; the private and nonprofit sectors, and the international community.

The Homeland Security Council also needs to establish a specific process and time frame for updating the national pandemic implementation plan that will involve key nonfederal stakeholders and incorporate lessons learned from exercises and other sources. Over at HHS, the department should expeditiously finalize guidance to assist state and local jurisdictions to determine how to effectively use limited supplies of antivirals and pre-pandemic vaccines in an influenza pandemic, including prioritizing target groups for pre-pandemic vaccines. HHS should further assist states in determining how they will allocate scarce medical resources in a mass casualty event by serving as a clearinghouse for sharing among the states altered standards of care guidelines that have been developed by

individual states or medical experts. While a system of coordinating councils was created to facilitate planning between government and the private sector for critical infrastructure protection, DHS should use these mechanisms more fully to help in planning for a pandemic influenza, GAO noted. HHS also should develop a departmental-level plan to deal with the health effects that responders may experience by incorporating lessons identified from the World Trade Center health programs.

Meanwhile, DHS needs to address gaps identified by federal and state officials in the federal government's ability to help states respond to the psychological consequences of catastrophic disasters.

In coordination with other federal partners such as DOD, HHS, and the Veterans Administration, GAO determined that DHS should address limitations in how the federal government provides assistance with the evacuation of nursing home facilities. Finally, GAO determined, HHS and DHS, in coordination with other federal agencies, should convene additional meetings of the states in the five federal influenza pandemic regions to help them address identified gaps in their pandemic planning.

http://www.hstoday.us/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5974&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=149

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Defense Science Board

November 5, 2008

Defense Imperatives for the New Administration

[EXCERPT] “Weapons of mass destruction challenge the safety of our homeland and our military forces. A major factor in addressing the threat from weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is a fundamental lack of information needed for interdiction and deterrence, calling for a major increase in focus on the full range of WMD by our intelligence community. Furthermore, one of the easiest ways for terrorists to create weapons such as bio-weapons is from materials and equipment purchased or stolen in the United States, which places a particular premium on domestic intelligence.....”

http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2008-11-Defense_Imperatives.pdf

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Arms Control Today

November 5, 2008

A New Paradigm: Shattering Obsolete Thinking on Arms Control and Nonproliferation

Christopher A. Ford

Challenging conventional thinking is rarely popular, even or perhaps especially when it is most needed. So it has been with the Bush administration's approach to arms control and nonproliferation issues. Determined to develop new approaches in arms control, nonproliferation, and strategic policy to deal with the new realities of a post-Cold War era, the administration found itself under fire from those determined to uphold traditional and often outmoded ways of thinking about these matters. Many of its critics doubtless now look forward to the Bush administration's departure.

Nevertheless, it seems clear that the administration's nonproliferation innovations are likely to remain valuable components of the next president's toolkit no matter who wins this year's election. Moreover, the Bush administration's efforts to move arms control and strategic policy emphatically into new territory, focused on 21st-century threats and opportunities rather than reflexively pursuing older agendas, will likely stand the test of time better than its critics can today imagine.

Reconceiving a Post-Cold War World

Early in the administration, its willingness to rethink the conventional wisdom of the arms control community, particularly that community's reliance on the concept of mutually assured destruction (MAD) and fear of missile defenses, led to dramatic and controversial results: withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty; agreement with Russia on the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT, aka the Moscow Treaty); and firm moves away from Russia-centric strategic planning. There is irony, of course, in the fact that it took a hawkish Republican administration finally to make the U.S. government as uncomfortable with the balance-of-terror policies of MAD as the arms control left and the disarmament community had been since the 1950s.

In a 21st-century context in which the United States no longer engaged in a strategic face-off against a rival geopolitical bloc devoted to world domination, U.S. officials felt it possible and desirable to build the U.S. strategic posture increasingly on a mix of growing defensive and reduced offensive capabilities, instead of forswearing strategic defenses and relying fatalistically on the restraint presumed to be generated by the prospect of utter nuclear catastrophe. U.S. officials no longer saw the potential for existential threats to the United States solely through a bipolar prism, and they wished to pursue the potential for a convergence of interests with their former rival and to deal more forthrightly with the emerging threats. There might be little immediate chance to evolve to a fully post-nuclear-weapon relationship, but U.S.-Russian strategic relations could nonetheless become much more "normal." This normal future, it was felt, should include strategic missile defenses and a growing reorientation of each nuclear superpower's strategic focus toward threats that did not come from the other.

Significantly, this focus on defenses did not mean that the administration expected to bulletproof itself against Russian nuclear attack, for even in the context of post-Cold War force reductions, reliable defenses always seemed highly improbable against the kinds of assault that Russia could mount. Rather, it meant that Washington had decided to end its monomaniacal strategic policy focus on a single superpower adversary. Especially for an administration staffed by senior officials painfully aware of the potential spread of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction (WMD)—a threat emphasized, for instance, in the 1998 report of a commission headed by future Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld[1]—it was important to improve the U.S. defensive posture. It was a testament to the end of the Cold War nuclear arms race that strategic relations with Moscow were no longer the driver for U.S. policy and that officials in Washington now made fighting such proliferation threats the centerpiece of their strategic approach. Defenses against relatively small-scale missile threats thus rapidly emerged as a cornerstone of administration policy.

The Bush administration also brought into office a profound skepticism about traditional arms control negotiations, which officials tended to feel were anachronisms predicated on a tense and competitive Cold War stalemate that no longer existed. In a 21st-century context, they felt, the "usual" sort of negotiations with Russia might actually have counterproductive effects, such as by encouraging a more adversarial relationship than strategic circumstances actually warranted and by giving each side incentives not to reduce strategic forces except as a result of rigid, slow, and painfully negotiated quid pro quo bargaining. Instead, in keeping with its appreciation of the end of the nuclear arms race, the administration embraced the idea of unilateral reductions to a level as low as possible consistent with enduring national security and alliance commitments. Because Russia at the time also wished, for its own reasons, to reduce its forces further, it was possible for the administration to codify parallel U.S. and Russian reductions in the Moscow Treaty.

In addition to Moscow Treaty cuts in deployed warheads and to delivery system reductions prescribed by the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) signed by President George H.W. Bush, the Bush administration moved rapidly ahead with further unilateral reductions in the U.S. arsenal. Many tons of fissile material have been removed from U.S. weapons programs, and the United States has been implementing a program of actual warhead dismantlement that has in fact been greatly accelerated since President George W. Bush's decision in 2004 to cut the size of the overall U.S. stockpile nearly in half by 2012. [2] Indeed, with the United States having met this milestone remarkably early in only 2007, Bush decided to reduce warhead numbers still further, by an additional 15 percent from what had been planned for 2012. When these additional dismantlements have been completed, the U.S. nuclear arsenal will be less than one-quarter of its size at the end of the Cold War and at its smallest size since the Eisenhower administration.[3]

In keeping with its nontraditional approach to arms control and informed by the insight that the key to continued progress is ensuring mutual understanding of the degree to which post-Cold War U.S.-Russian relations are not based on nuclear weapons competition, the Bush administration has also been pursuing the establishment of a

legally binding transparency and confidence-building regime with Russia to replace START when that treaty expires in 2009.[4]

The movement of U.S. thinking into emphatically post-Cold War territory has not been without its problems. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates apparently recently felt it necessary, for instance, to remove the top leadership of the Air Force after a couple of embarrassing incidents of incompetence and inattention suggested that the military needed to be reminded to take its traditional nuclear weapons responsibilities more seriously.[5] On the whole, however, the Bush administration deserves credit for a dramatic shift away from late-20th-century nuclear arms competition and a wholesale reorientation of strategic policy into a post-arms race world. The United States had not been pursuing a competitive nuclear policy with Russia since the end of the Cold War, but until the Bush administration, U.S. strategic policy had continued along lines familiar since before the collapse of the Soviet Union: for example, the pursuit of reductions principally through traditional arms control negotiations such as START II and III, coupled with an emphasis on maintaining a fundamentally defenseless nuclear posture pursuant to the ABM Treaty. There is thus a sad irony in the criticism Bush policy elicited from an arms control community that now seemed unable to take "yes" for an answer when faced with a U.S. president interested not only in moving Russia off center stage as the focus of strategic threat planning and making the two powers' mutual homicide pact increasingly a thing of the past, but also in moving unilaterally in that direction.[6]

For full text of this article see: http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_11/ford

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Reuters (For Personal Use ONLY)

November 5, 2008

Iran Warns U.S. Military After Obama Win

By Parisa Hafezi

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran warned U.S. forces in Iraq on Wednesday that it would respond to any violation of Iranian airspace, a message analysts said seemed directed at the new U.S. president-elect more than neighboring American troops. The Iranian army statement, reported by state radio, came after a cross-border raid last month by U.S. forces into Syria, a move that was condemned by Damascus and Tehran. But an Iranian politician said the timing suggested it was directed at Barack Obama, who won Tuesday's U.S. vote, more than the U.S. military, and might reflect concern by hardliners in Iran who thrived on confrontation with Washington.

Obama has said he would toughen sanctions on Iran but has also held out the possibility of direct talks to resolve rows, which include a dispute over Tehran's nuclear ambitions. "Recently it has been seen that American army helicopters were flying a small distance from Iraq's border with Iran and, because of the closeness to the border, the danger of them violating Iran's border is possible," state radio reported.

"Iran's armed forces will respond to any violation," radio said, citing a statement from Iran's army headquarters. Washington, which has not had diplomatic ties with Tehran since 1980, has accused Iran of funding, equipping and training militants in Iraq. Iran denies this and says security problems are due to the presence of U.S. troops who should quit Iraq. "This is a clear message to the American president-elect because radicals are not very happy that Obama has been elected," said the Iranian politician.

LOGGERHEADS

He said Iran could have chosen to pass such a message through the Swiss embassy in Tehran, which handles U.S. interests in the absence of a U.S. mission. That route had been used in the past. The two countries are also at loggerheads over Iran's disputed nuclear work. Washington says Tehran is seeking an atomic bomb. Tehran says it wants the technology to make electricity so that it can export more of its oil and gas. Iranian government spokesman Gholamhossein Elham said he hoped Obama would make "fundamental changes in the approach of the United States toward global issues" and end "aggression toward other countries," state broadcaster IRIB reported.

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said, according to IRNA news agency: "The election of Barack Obama ... is a clear sign of the American people's wish and desire for fundamental changes in America's domestic and foreign

policies." Obama, like Bush, has not ruled out military action although he has criticized the outgoing administration for not pushing for more diplomacy and engagement with Iran.

"Change of political figures is not important by itself. What is more important is a change of American policy," Ali Aghamohammadi, a close aide to Iran's most powerful figure, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, told Reuters. Iran has warned it would respond to any attack on its territory by targeting U.S. interests and America's ally Israel, as well as closing the Strait of Hormuz, the waterway at the mouth of the Gulf and vital route for world oil supplies.

Some Iranians were enthusiastic about the U.S. vote. "I hope that our relations with (America) will improve as Obama has talked of direct negotiations with the Iran," said Mona Saremi, a 22-year-old student. But some analysts were cautious, saying Obama had to show he was offering more than a change in style from Bush. "It is for the Americans to show that something has changed, not the Iranians," Tehran University professor Mohammad Marandi said.

(Additional reporting by Zahra Hosseinian and Fredrik Dahl; Writing by Edmund Blair; Editing by Louise Ireland)

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<http://www.reuters.com/articlePrint?articleId=USTRE4A43PQ20081105>

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Washington Times

November 6, 2008

BERES/LOPEZ: Presidential imperative

How to Win the War on Terror

Louis Rene Beres and Clare Lopez

Despite a noisy campaign, neither presidential candidate ever really understood jihadist terror. Now it is essential that the origins and purpose of suicide-terrorism become fully apparent to the president-elect. The core meanings of jihadist operations have little or nothing to do with criminality, deprivation or oppression, but rather are founded in fear, hatred and Islamist supremacism. These deeply held personal feelings derive from patterns of shared belief and indoctrination. A consuming horror of death, yearning for the ecstasy of anticipated union with Allah, grotesque joy from targeting "others" who "lack sacredness" and an abiding hatred of "apostates" and "infidels" are the real motivators that drive suicide bombers to their atrocities.

Suicide-bombing terrorism comes from centuries of Islamic doctrine, derived from what is held to be divinely revealed scripture. But declarations, charters and Islamist fatwas provide only an abstract of juridical texts compiled by Islamic scholars. These define jihad as just war against non-Muslims to establish the religion. This is not the understanding we expected from our presidential candidates, but it is what jihadist terror is all about.

The monstrosity of suicide terror-violence leaves humanity grasping for some explanation to bridge the gap between those who would deliberately inflict such anguish and ourselves. For many Americans, and likely for our president-elect, such barbarism defies not only language, but also the very definition of what it means to be human. The inexpressibility of pain impedes our ability to recognize terror-violence as evil and unforgivable. Instead, it is easier to fall back on widespread but legally incorrect celebrations of terrorists as "freedom fighters."

Understanding jihadist terror-violence is a responsibility that carries legal consequences for those who swear to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. It carries existential consequences for all who cherish a way of life based on the values of Athens, Rome and Jerusalem. For both citizen and policy-maker, the most important truth is that the jihadist terrorist fights not only to compel unbelievers to embrace Islam. The jihadist terrorist kills and dies to end the sovereignty of unbelievers, a sovereignty that prevents the supremacy of Islam from transforming Dar al-Harb into Dar al-Islam.

Jihadist terror is literally commanded by Allah in the Koran. "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power ... to strike terror into the hearts of the enemies of God and your enemies." Early Muslims seized eagerly on such divine injunctions, launching a campaign of political assassination against local Jewish poets and leaders. These killings were followed by the siege and expulsion of Jewish tribes around Medina, the massacre of Jewish men, and enslavement of their women and children. Horrified, other tribes capitulated, fled or converted to Islam. Calculated, calibrated application of terror can work, and jihadist terrorists know it.

Jihadist terrorists long since adapted these lessons to modern asymmetric warfare. As Pakistani Brig. Gen. S.K. Malik wrote in his 1979 classic, "The Quranic Concept of War": "Terror struck into the hearts of the enemies is not only a means, it is the end in itself. Once a condition of terror into the opponent's heart is obtained, hardly anything is left to be achieved." That this most fundamental of our enemies' strategic philosophy is scarcely known in our national war colleges is to our detriment and leads to the absurd elevation of "cross-cultural competency" above formulating a basic enemy threat doctrine.

Jihadists struck terror into the hearts of Spaniards heading to the polls in March 2004: The government changed hands, and the new prime minister quickly pulled Spain's troops out of Iraq. The British presented a tougher challenge, but after attacks on the London Underground and Glasgow Airport, Shariah is now an enforceable legal system in the United Kingdom. Here at home, our government's fear of another September 11 cedes this war's lexicon to the jihadist enemy, thus ensuring that the ranks of our counterterrorism cadre have no idea whom or what it is we fight, or why.

Our next president must recognize that the remorseless violence of jihadist terrorists springs from deformed images of the sacred and implacable hatred of the "profane." The seemingly nihilistic obliteration of human flesh in a spray of nails and screws and flame is both an abstraction - self-sacrifice on the altar of expected immortality - and a shrewdly calculated tactic of psychological warfare. This tactic intends to destroy from within our faith in our values and ourselves. Our willful blindness allows the jihadist enemy to advance ever closer to transforming his or her random victims' pain into jihadist power. Before our next president can win the war on terror, this crucial fact must first be understood.

Louis Rene Beres is an author and professor of political science at Purdue University. Clare Lopez, a former CIA field operations officer, is vice president of the Intelligence Summit and a professor at the Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/nov/06/presidential-imperative/>

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Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
November 06, 2008

Military Expert says Russian Missiles More Bark than Bite

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has pledged to deploy short-range Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad, a western exclave that is surrounded by European Union countries. Is this a new initiative, and what are the missiles' capabilities?

RFE/RL correspondent Kathleen Moore spoke to Duncan Lennox, editor of "Jane's Strategic Weapons Systems," and started by asking him to describe the different types of Iskander missiles.

Duncan Lennox: There are two basic types of Iskander, one that they've offered for the export market, which has a range of 280 kilometers, and that's normally referred to as the Iskander-E, and one which they're believed to have incorporated into their own service, the Russians, which is sometimes called Iskander-M, and has occasionally been called Tender, and that is reported to have a range of up to 400 kilometers. There's no clear statement from the Russians as to the range of their present Iskander missiles.

RFE/RL: These are meant to be highly precise missiles, is that right? What are their capabilities?

Lennox: Yes, very accurate, within 30 meters [of the target] and to carry a single warhead, which can vary from about 480 kilograms up to about 700 kilograms and would expect to be high explosive, either a unitary high explosive or submunitions.

RFE/RL: Can they be upgraded to give them a longer range?

Lennox: It's unlikely because the Russians fell foul of the INF [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces] treaty in 1987, which bans the U.S. and Russia from having short-range ballistic missiles with a range greater than 500 kilometers, and they had to scrap their SS-23s because they exceeded that range. So I would think they would be reluctant to increase the range with that treaty still in place.

RFE/RL: Could they potentially reach the proposed missile-interceptor site in Poland that's to be part of the U.S. missile-defense system?

Lennox: Yes. Could they do any damage? Probably not.

RFE/RL: Why do you say that?

Lennox: Because if the Americans ever put missiles in Poland, then they would be in silos and a high-explosive warhead probably wouldn't do a lot of damage. It would have to be incredibly accurate and a very lucky shot to actually cause any problems.

RFE/RL: What about the proposed radar site in the Czech Republic?

Lennox: I doubt if it could reach that far.

RFE/RL: Given that, what is the likely aim of the Russian plan?

Lennox: I think the aim is to express Russia's anger and disappointment with the Americans for continuing with the proposals to put missiles in Poland and the radar in the Czech Republic.

RFE/RL: This is not a new initiative either, is it?

Lennox: No, we've heard this over the last nine months at least, from various senior Russian officers and people in the government. It really is just an expression of anger and disappointment at the American decision.

RFE/RL: There had been some problems with the development of the Iskander missiles, with delays and a lack of funding, is that right?

Lennox: There have been a lot of problems because of financial stringencies in the Russian armed forces, but they appear to have been overcome now. If you remember the Dutch [government] said quite clearly that the Iskander had been used in Georgia in the summer, though the Russians said it wasn't.

RFE/RL: And what's your view?

Lennox: I can't believe the Dutch got it wrong. They made a very detailed inquiry into the death of one of their reporters, and the Dutch [issued] quite a comprehensive report. So I would assume that Iskander is in service with the Russian military.

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<http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1339040.html>

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Farsuna Service Portal, Azerbaijan

November 5, 2008

Russia to Deploy Missiles to Jam US Defense Shield in Europe

Russia is to deploy short-range missiles in its Baltic enclave which borders NATO members Poland and Lithuania to defuse and jam the US anti-missile system in Europe if need be, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said Wednesday in his state-of-the-nation speech. According to him, his country would deploy Iskander missiles with a range of 500 km (312 miles) in the Kaliningrad region to neutralize the anti-missile shield the United States is building in Poland and the Czech Republic. Medvedev added that Russia is also considering using navy resources as part of its response to the U.S. missile shield.

Washington plans to create a European missile defense shield consisting of early-warning radars and interceptors to detect and intercept incoming missiles from what it describes as "rogue states" such as Iran and North Korea. Moscow reacted that it views the intercepting missiles in Poland and the radar in the Czech Republic as a threat to its national security and an attempt to spy on Russia because the timing of the anti-missile plan turns out to be against Russia, rather than Iran, since neither Iran nor North Korea possess such missiles to attack Europe.

Moscow offered the Pentagon the joint use of a Russian-leased Gabala radar station in Azerbaijan at the doorstep of Iran instead but Washington said the suggestion could be a complement, but not an alternative to the planned anti-missile shield. Russia's state news agency Ria Novosti described the Iskander-M (SS-26 Stone) tactical system as a military set equipped with high-precision cruise missiles capable of carrying multiple conventional and nuclear warheads to the target.

Meanwhile, Russian analysts said the incoming Obama administration will not go ahead with the European missile defense shield plans because Barack Obama stated earlier that he doesn't support unpromising military plans. "I will cut tens of billions of dollars in wasteful spending. I will cut investments in unproven missile defense systems. I will not militarize space. I will slow our development of future combat systems," Obama said in his campaign.

<http://www.farsuna.com/en/news.php?id=2917>

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The Sydney Morning Herald
November 7, 2008

Russia Takes Hard Line at US Defence System

Philip Pan in Moscow

NATO has voiced "serious worries" about Russian plans to place short-range missiles on its western border if Washington proceeds with its missile defence systems in Eastern Europe. A spokesman for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Robert Pszczel, said the alliance had concerns about the compatibility of the Russian plans with arms control "arrangements". "Moreover, placing of these Iskander missiles in the Kaliningrad region would not help NATO and Russia to improve their relationship," he said. The plans to deploy missiles on the doorstep of the EU were announced by the Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev, during his first state of the nation address on Wednesday.

The Czech foreign ministry described the announcement as "unfortunate", but the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, said it should be seen more as a political message. "In the event that the situation gets bad, the balance of power is already well known," Mr Tusk said. "So we should consider the announcement as a new political step, not a military one." Kremlin officials have threatened before to target Poland by moving tactical missiles into the Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad, most recently after Poland agreed in August to host a US interceptor base. But Mr Medvedev's threat "to neutralise, when necessary" the American installation was the most explicit and public endorsement of the plan by a top Russian leader yet.

The warning appeared intended to signal the Kremlin's priorities to the new US president-elect and could serve as an early foreign policy test for Senator Obama, who has said he supports missile defences against Iran and North Korea but has criticised the Bush Administration for failing to consult allies about the shield, exaggerating its capabilities and rushing deployment for political purposes. If the US president-elect dumps the project he risks accusations of weakness and caving in to Russian bullying. Mr Medvedev said Russia was ready to work with the US if it abandoned its "mistaken, egotistical and sometimes simply dangerous" policies.

The Russian Finance Minister, Alexei Kudrin, suggested Senator Obama's election would boost the global economy, and the Russian ambassador to NATO said he expected the president-elect to improve the alliance's relationship with Moscow and lift the limits on co-operation imposed after Russia's war with Georgia. Mr Medvedev's wide-ranging speech on Wednesday held out little hope for democratic reforms and proposed amending the Russian constitution to lengthen the parliamentary term for the State Duma, from four to five years, and the presidential term to six years.

The Washington Post, Guardian News & Media, Agence France-Presse

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/russia-takes-hard-line-at-us-defence-system/2008/11/06/1225561044606.html>

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Los Angeles Times
November 6, 2008

Russia Plans to Counter U.S. Antimissile System in Eastern Europe

Medvedev says Moscow will put missiles near the border with Poland, where the U.S. will base interceptor missiles, and use radio jamming against the antimissile system.

By Sergei L. Loiko

Reporting from Moscow — Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said Wednesday that Moscow would place short-range missiles near the Polish border "to neutralize, if necessary" a planned U.S. antimissile system. In his first state of the nation speech, Medvedev also said plans to take three nuclear missile regiments off combat duty in Kozelsk would be suspended and that Moscow would attempt to use radio jamming against the U.S. system. In August, Poland signed a deal that would base 10 U.S. interceptor missiles on its territory. The accompanying radar system would be placed in the adjacent Czech Republic. Both former Soviet satellites are now part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Washington has always maintained that the system is insurance against a possible missile launch by countries such as Iran, but Moscow believes it could be used to weaken Russia. "Given what we have had to face in recent years -- the construction of the global ABM [antiballistic missile] system, the encirclement of Russia with military bases, the unbridled expansion of NATO and other gifts to Russia -- a solid impression is forming, that they are simply testing our patience," Medvedev said.

In a phone interview, Alexander Konovalov, president of the Institute for Strategic Assessment think tank, played down Medvedev's comments. He said that the nuclear missiles in Kozelsk were old and were being kept in place only because a new type of missile to replace them was not being manufactured quickly enough. He also thought radio jamming of the antimissile system was not very feasible. He also took issue with the threat to place missiles near Poland.

"The deployment of an Iskander missile complex in the Kaliningrad region also sounds pretty pointless," he said, "because first of all these are tactical missiles and they have not been produced in sufficient numbers yet. Secondly, their working radius is 280 km [174 miles], which is very small. And thirdly, they can carry only 500 kilos [1,102 pounds] of ordinary explosives, which most likely will not be enough to destroy an interceptor missile shaft."

Stanislav Belkovsky, president of the National Strategy Institute think tank, said he did not believe that the Russian president was seeking to increase tensions with the U.S. "The speech was clearly prepared for domestic consumption," he said. Medvedev made similar comments in his address: "Let me stress that we don't have problems with the American people. We don't have an inborn anti-Americanism. And we hope that our partners, the new U.S. administration, will make a choice in favor of full-fledged relations with Russia."

Loiko is a Times staff writer.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-fg-medvedev6-2008nov06.0.6184766.story>

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The New York Times

November 6, 2008

Russia Warns of Missile Deployment

By ELLEN BARRY and SOPHIA KISHKOVSKY

MOSCOW — President Dmitri A. Medvedev of Russia greeted his future American counterpart, Senator Barack Obama, with bristling language on Wednesday, promising to place short-range missiles on Russia's western border if Washington proceeded with its planned missile defense system in Eastern Europe. In a speech to the Federal Assembly, Mr. Medvedev said Russia had "no inherent conflict with America" and invited the new administration to start afresh with Moscow. However, he did not congratulate Mr. Obama on the election he had won only hours before, or even mention him by name. Later in the day, the Kremlin announced that Mr. Medvedev had sent Mr. Obama a congratulatory telegram.

The speech — which was rescheduled twice in recent weeks for revisions as the financial crisis worsened — showed Mr. Medvedev asserting himself with concrete plans, including a proposal to lengthen the presidential term to six years from four. He harshly condemned state interference in civil society, calling for reforms that seemed to have been deferred by a string of crises this fall. "The state bureaucracy, as 20 years ago, is being guided by the same old mistrust in the free individual and in free enterprise," he said, in a state of the nation address that has been a tradition since 1994. "A strong state and an all-powerful bureaucracy is not the same thing. The former is an instrument which society needs to develop, to maintain order and strengthens democratic institutions. The latter is extremely dangerous."

Mr. Medvedev also proposed new rules that would allow opposition parties marginally more representation in Parliament, challenging the consolidation of power that was the trademark of his predecessor, Vladimir V. Putin, who is now the prime minister. He also proposed granting slightly more self-determination in local administrations. "He showed that he wants to be a real president," said Konstantin V. Remchukov, editor in chief of the Independent Newspaper, a respected Moscow daily.

Sergei A. Karaganov, a prominent Russian political scientist, said he was "amazed" to hear Mr. Medvedev committing to liberalization at a time of crisis. "It went against the wind," Mr. Karaganov said. "At this juncture, we just need to see whether he follows up on it." As the speech approached, Mr. Medvedev faced intense pressure to calm nerves in Russia, crippled this fall by capital flight, a plunge in the stock market and a precipitous drop in oil prices. Mr. Putin typically gave the speech in the spring, using it to announce crowd-pleasing investments in infrastructure projects and social welfare programs. Mr. Medvedev, by contrast, had to address the two shocks that had befallen Russia since he became president, the financial crisis and the war in Georgia, while combating the impression that Mr. Putin retained control over major decisions.

The speech he gave Wednesday, originally planned for Oct. 23, gave scant information about the government's economic strategy going forward. It did, however, squarely lay blame for Russia's troubles on the United States. Mr. Medvedev said that American regulators had inflated a financial bubble and that the ensuing collapse "carried in its downfall to the trajectory of recession all financial markets of the planet." He also said Washington had started the war in Georgia, saying, "Tskhinvali's tragedy is, among other things, the result of the arrogant course of the U.S. administration, which hates criticism and prefers unilateral decisions." But it was the planned missile deployment, a possible early foreign policy test for Mr. Obama, that captured attention in the West on Wednesday.

Mr. Medvedev described specific measures Moscow would take if Washington went ahead with a plan to station a missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic. He said Russia would post mobile Iskander missiles — tactical weapons designed for use against targets like long-range artillery and airfields, in addition to missile defense

systems — around Kaliningrad, an enclave at Russia's western border. He also said Russia would use radio equipment to jam the Western missile defense system.

"These are forced measures," he said. "We have told our partners more than once that we want positive cooperation, we want to act together to combat common threats. But they, unfortunately, don't want to listen to us." Geoff Morrell, the Pentagon press secretary, responded sharply in a telephone interview to Mr. Medvedev's pledge on missiles, calling it "literally and figuratively misguided." "The Russians know full well that our European missile defense system is not capable of defeating their enormous ballistic missile arsenal," Mr. Morrell said with evident frustration. "Rather, it is meant to counter Iran's growing missile threat. And we have bent over backwards to invite the Russians to partner with us to defeat this common threat."

Speaking more broadly, another senior Bush administration official said the tone of the address "follows a line of attributing blame for things to outsiders, to the U.S." The second official, who would speak only on condition of anonymity because of the need to maintain relations with Moscow, said it was no accident that the speech was scheduled for the day after the presidential election. "The day the U.S. gets a new president, it's more important for them to make sure Russians hear what the Russian president says in his State of the Federation speech," this senior official said. "It's because it's all about them. They have to find an outside villain to offset the criticism they are starting to hear about their handling of the economy."

Other analysts agreed that the timing of the confrontational speech was not coincidental. Russian elites have staked their hopes on a victory by Mr. Obama, viewing him as a far friendlier negotiating partner than his Republican opponent, Senator John McCain. "This is a warning, this is a clear warning," said Alexander Rahr, director of the Russian/Eurasian program at the German Council on Foreign Relations. "I think they want to show that Russia is important and we want a multipolar world." Clifford Kupchan, a Russia expert at the Eurasia Group, a consultancy in Washington, said the chilly rhetoric was to be expected "in the context of a really bad relationship."

"When a relationship is this troubled, you wait for concrete steps from the new guy," Mr. Kupchan said. "You wait to see if his policy will be any better than the old one." In one of his biggest applause lines, Mr. Medvedev said Russia's policy in Georgia expressed treasured values. "There are things which cannot be traded off, there are things for which it's necessary to fight and triumph," he said. "This is what is dear to you, which is dear to me, to all of us. Something we cannot imagine our country without. This is why we shall not retreat in the Caucasus." For domestic audiences, among the biggest news was the proposed extension of the president's term by two years. After Mr. Medvedev made his speech, Kremlin spokesmen told the Interfax news agency that the change to Russia's Constitution would not require a vote, and that it would not apply to incumbent politicians.

Political observers were left to puzzle it out: Why would Mr. Medvedev push for a reform that would have no relevance for another eight years? The obvious answer, Mr. Rahr said, is that Mr. Putin is planning a quick return to his old job. "Otherwise, it makes no sense," he said. "A president in power for four months? This is not only foolish, this is completely impossible."

Thom Shanker contributed reporting from Washington.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/06/world/europe/06russia.html?bl&ex=1226120400&en=80ca9fabef5ec328&ei=5087%0A>

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Russia Warns US of Potential New Arms Race

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev says he might deploy missiles to 'neutralize' a planned US-backed missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic.

By David Montero

Russia emerged Wednesday as a front-runner among the many foreign-policy challenges President-elect Barack Obama is likely to face. In his first State of the Union address, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev warned the next American administration of a possible new arms race. The **New York Times** reports that while his speech stressed that Russia has "no inherent conflict with America," Mr. Medvedev took a firm stance: President Dmitri A. Medvedev of Russia greeted his future American counterpart, Senator Barack Obama, with bristling language on Wednesday, promising to place short-range missiles on Russia's western border if Washington proceeded with its planned missile defense system in Eastern Europe.... "We have told our partners more than once that we want positive cooperation, we want to act together to combat common threats. But they, unfortunately, don't want to listen to us," [Medvedev said].

The Moscow Times describes Medvedev's speech, his first State of the Union address, as "a club sandwich": Rather than sending out a straightforward message, Medvedev offered some liberal reformist proposals – juicily sandwiched between layers of hawkish threats and announcements. Medvedev began and ended his speech with a foreign policy message that seemed to confirm Western fears that he would follow former President Vladimir Putin's hawkish stance. But in between, he offered some domestic proposals welcomed by proponents of liberal change. The remarks of the Russian president come as "[t]ension in Russian-American relations has been driven to a post-Cold War high by Moscow's war with US ally Georgia," reports the **Associated Press**.

US, Polish, and Czech officials have been in discussion about a defensive missile system to fend off "rogue states" for a year, according to **Agence France-Presse**. The aim of the base, and a related radar in the Czech Republic, is to complete an anti-missile shield already in place in the United States, Greenland and Britain. Washington says the system, endorsed by NATO this year, aims to fend off potential missile attacks by what it calls "rogue states," specifically Iran. Mr. Obama is expected to back the missile plan, **Reuters** points out.

Poland and the Czech Republic expect the incoming Obama administration to go ahead with the European missile defense shield which will be located on their soils, the countries' prime ministers said on Wednesday. Some Democrats in the U.S. Congress have questioned the planned missile shield and pushed to cut its funding, raising fears that President-elect Barack Obama could walk away from the project after taking office in January.... Under President George W. Bush, the White House had pushed to complete negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic ahead of Tuesday's presidential election.... "Already during the election campaign, Barack Obama said his attitude toward the missile shield did not differ from that of the Bush administration," said [Czech Prime Minister, Mirek Topolánek.]

As a result, Medvedev's challenge could test Obama's administration from the get-go, says **The Washington Post**: The threat, which came just hours after the conclusion of the U.S. election, appeared intended to signal Moscow's priorities to the American president-elect. It could present an early foreign policy test for Barack Obama, who says he supports a missile defense system against Iran but has also accused the Bush administration of exaggerating the system's capabilities and rushing deployment for political purposes.

The Times (of London) points out that Medvedev's speech did more than offer stiff words: Taking advantage of the world's attention on the US elections, Mr Medvedev also cancelled plans to withdraw three intercontinental ballistic missile regiments from western Russia by 2010. Western officials quickly condemned Russia's strong language, the paper reports. Nato's eastern members greeted the Russian move with dismay. A Czech Foreign Ministry spokesman described the Kremlin's move as unfortunate. Lithuania's President Adamkus accused his Russian counterpart of going back on his word.

The Pentagon also expressed its dismay, saying that America's planned missile system was neither intended to nor capable of countering Russia's missile arsenal, The New York Times adds. "The Russians know full well that our European missile defense system is not capable of defeating their enormous ballistic missile arsenal," [Geoff Morrell, the Pentagon press secretary] said with evident frustration. "Rather, it is meant to counter Iran's growing missile threat. And we have bent over backwards to invite the Russians to partner with us to defeat this common threat.

Following Medvedev's speech, **RIA Novosti**, a Russian news agency linked to the government, reported the assessment of a Russian analyst: The placement of short-range tactical missiles near Poland would be the best response to U.S. missile plans for Europe, a Russian military analyst said on Wednesday.... "The deployment of Iskander missile systems with a range of 500 km (310 miles) [in the Kaliningrad region] would allow Russia to target the entire territory of Poland and also parts of Germany and the Czech Republic," said Anatoly Tsyganok, head of the Moscow-based Military Forecast Center. The Iskander-M tactical system is equipped with high-precision SS-26 Stone 'quasiballistic' missiles reportedly capable of carrying multiple conventional and nuclear warheads.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/1106/p99s01-duts.html>

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Daily Yomiuri Online

Govt may Propose Missile-Defense Satellite

The Yomiuri Shimbun

5 November 2008

The government's headquarters for space development strategy looks set to call for discussions on the introduction of an early warning satellite capable of detecting the launch of an enemy ballistic missile, according to a draft plan obtained by The Yomiuri Shimbun. The proposal forms part of the draft plan, which is aimed at promoting the use of rockets and satellites for defense purposes. The plan also proposes a feasibility study on introducing more satellites to improve the nation's communications network.

The draft plan was drawn up by the secretariat of the headquarters, which is headed by Prime Minister Taro Aso, to clarify which projects should be made priorities in the fiscal 2009 budget. The draft lists Himawari weather satellites--which some fear might be put out of service due to budget shortfalls at the Meteorological Agency--Earth-observation satellites and others used for scientific purposes as "public satellites." The move indicates the government intends to take on the responsibility of promoting the use of satellites. The draft also calls on the Education, Science and Technology Ministry to amend its proposal for a new satellite tasked with monitoring natural disasters to ensure it also can be used for security and crisis-management purposes.

The draft plan said it might be necessary to add small and medium-sized rockets to the nation's arsenal, in addition to the large H-2A rockets that currently form part of it. However, government officials have expressed concern that the draft refers to the GX rocket--which the education ministry's Space Activities Commission plans to recommend the government not introduce--as a midsize rocket. "While many question the need to go ahead with the GX development project, [this plan] is tantamount to approving it," one official said. The draft was discussed Tuesday at a meeting of experts at the headquarters, and was scheduled to be approved at a meeting on Nov. 27.

<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/20081105TDY02307.htm>

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i.StockAnalyst

Wednesday, November 05, 2008

Moscow Invites Asia Pacific Countries to Discuss Security in Region - Lavrov

(Source: Daily News Bulletin; Moscow - English) TOKYO. Nov 5 (Interfax) - Moscow is closely following the deployment of a theater missile defense system in the Asia Pacific region and calls for developing a security and cooperation system there, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said. "Russia is closely following an intensive deployment of a theater missile defense system in the region. A number of countries of the region take these plans as a threat to their national security, not to mention that this calls into question global strategic stability, because it is

well-known that the missile defense system in Asia Pacific is part of the U.S.-developed global missile defense system," Lavrov said in a lecture on Russia's policy in Asia Pacific and Russian-Japanese relations in Tokyo.

"The policy of consolidation of closed bilateral military- political alliances and the formation of new polygons for defense interaction in Asia Pacific is in striking dissonance with imperatives of the modern time. Such policy leads to estrangement, cements the old division lines and draws new ones," he said. "It is necessary to take a realistic approach and understand that the establishment of a credible security and cooperation system in Asia Pacific is a matter of not just one year and perhaps not even a decade," Lavrov said.

"We invite all Asia Pacific countries to engage in a broad and open discussion about the future of our region, about ideas and mechanisms that could ensure non-divisibility of security, efficient regional interaction, and universal application of international law and other agreed-upon rules of the game," he said. An APEC summit to take place in Vladivostok in 2012 is a tangible sign of Russia's recognition as a factor of strategic stability and sustainable economic growth by other Asia Pacific countries, he said. Commenting on the ongoing global financial crisis, Lavrov said Russia is prepared to make not only an intellectual but also a financial contribution to the efforts to overcome it, Lavrov said. "Suffice it to compare: Russia alone possesses gold and foreign currency reserves comparable to the IMF's resources," he said.

http://www.istockanalyst.com/article/viewiStockNews+articleid_2772300.html

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The Prague Post

November 5th, 2008 issue

Radar Base on Unsure Ground

Treaty ratification uncertain during Obering's visit

By [Markéta Hulpachová](#)

Staff Writer, *The Prague Post*

The fate of the much-debated treaty on the construction of a U.S. radar base some 90 kilometers from Prague appears more uncertain than ever, despite recent promotional visits by U.S. officials. In his final visit to Prague as the head of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA), General Henry Obering continued to make his case for the implementation of the two-part system in Poland and the Czech Republic. In return for the Czech Republic's hosting the base, the United States agreed to fortify future partnerships with local scientists. During his visit, Obering signed a framework agreement paving the road to future collaboration on missile-defense research. As a start, Obering pledged to contribute \$600,000 in grants for three local research projects focusing on X-ray, radar and stereoscopic technologies.

Obering will leave his post of MDA chief Nov. 22, to be replaced by his deputy, Patrick O'Reilly. As a token of appreciation for his negotiations with the Czech Republic during his tenure, Defense Minister Vlasta Parkanová presented Obering with the State Defense Cross. However, growing uncertainty over Parliament's ratification of the Czech-U.S. radar treaties overshadow the government's displays of goodwill.

In the wake of the opposition's record-breaking triumph over the governing Civic Democrats in the recent Senate and regional elections, the treaties' fate rests in the hands of several defectors in the lower house. These deputies are now more likely to align themselves with the strengthening opposition, which is staunchly against the radar, as is approximately two-thirds of the population.

The volatile situation has not gone unnoticed by Obering, who told local journalists that the United States would be disappointed if it were faced with the obstacle of finding an alternate location for the radar base, adding that such a back-up plan was already in the works.

Meanwhile, a voice against the radar bellows from the Kremlin, whose highest representatives recently requested a permanent military presence at the radar base, resurrecting local memories of Soviet control. Whether such rhetoric prompts deputies to ratify the treaty or sways opinion against it remains to be determined. After a series of

convoluted and inconclusive votes in Parliament during the treaty's initial reading starting Oct. 29, the ratification vote has been postponed indefinitely.

<http://www.praguepost.com/articles/2008/11/05/radar-base-on-unsure-ground.php>

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The Diplomatic Courier (For Personal Use Only)
November 6, 2008

The Iran-Saudi Cold War

James Brazier, Guest Contributor

There has been no Western outcry against Saudi Arabia's mediation between the Taliban and the Afghan government. On the contrary, the Mecca talks were accompanied by senior British and U.S. officials indicating that such discussions were an evitable part of ending the war in Afghanistan. Only one country has denounced the meeting as an unacceptable capitulation to terrorism and extremism: Iran. This position reflects the untold story of Iran's tussle with Saudi Arabia for regional influence.

For full text of the article see: <http://www.diplomaticcourier.org/kmitan/articleback.php?newsid=228>

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Aljazeera.net
Thursday, 6 November 2008

Spain Refuses Bin Laden Son Asylum

Spain has rejected a petition by Osama bin Laden's son for political asylum, months after the British government refused to allow him to live in England. Omar bin Laden and his wife Zaina Alsabah bin Laden lost their appeal to live in Spain "on the grounds of insufficient evidence of danger or threat to [Omar's] life", a statement released by the couple on Wednesday said. "As you know, we are having a very difficult time finding a country who will accept Omar, only because of his family name. This is unfair. Omar is not his father," the statement said. Omar has repeatedly called on his father, who leads al-Qaeda, to renounce violence.

British 'concern'

In his appeal to the Spanish government on Monday, the 28-year-old had said that his life was in danger because he refused to support his father. His request for asylum came immediately after he arrived at Madrid's Barajas airport on an Egypt Air flight from Cairo. Omar lives in the Egyptian capital with his 52-year-old wife, formerly known as Jane Felix-Browne. The decision to reject the asylum petition met the rules of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, a spokesman for Spain's interior ministry said. "He was notified of the decision early this afternoon," he said. In April, Britain prevented Omar from settling in the country, saying that his asylum would arouse "public concern". He had said that he wanted to live in England with Zaina at her home near Northwich in the northwestern county of Cheshire.

Renunciation of violence

While he has condemned violent acts in media interviews, Omar has declined to directly condemn his father, particularly over the September 11, 2001, attacks. "Those who know the Arab culture understand that sons are not allowed to publicly attack their fathers. This is cultural," the statement released on Wednesday by Omar and his wife said. "This does not mean that Omar agrees with his father's activities. He does not ... Only those who truly know the Arab culture will realise Omar's bravery in taking a stance for peace against his father."

Omar is the fourth of 11 children born to his father's first wife, and he is one of 19 children Osama bin Laden has fathered. The couple said that their decision to leave Egypt for England "had nothing to do with any actions of the Egyptian government". "There were outsiders working within Egypt which created genuine concern for Omar's safety. That is the only reason we left Egypt," the statement said.

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2008/11/2008115212259449905.html>

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New York Times
November 4, 2008
Pg. 19

Detainee Convicted on Terrorism Charges

By William Glaberson

A military panel at the Guantánamo Bay naval base convicted a former propaganda chief for Al Qaeda of terrorism charges on Monday and sentenced him to life in prison, giving the Bush administration a second conviction in a war-crimes trial there. But the conviction of the detainee, Ali Hamza al Bahlul, was a measured victory for the government, which has been struggling for seven years to prove the effectiveness of its military commission system for trying terrorism suspects at the American naval station at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

The guilty verdict had been expected because Mr. Bahlul, a Yemeni who prosecutors said was a close aide to Osama bin Laden, did not offer any defense. Saying he did not accept the authority of the tribunal, he insisted that his lawyer remain mute in a weeklong trial that drew little attention. The Pentagon's response to the verdict was muted. "Al Bahlul received a full and fair trial," said a spokesman, Cmdr. Jeffrey D. Gordon.

The conviction did not appear likely to affect the contentious debate about the use of military tribunals, said Glenn M. Sulmasy, a national security law specialist at the Coast Guard Academy. "This was a victory for the government," Mr. Sulmasy said, "but it may not have positive impact because of the erosion of support and legitimacy for the commission process."

Mr. Bahlul was convicted of conspiracy, solicitation to commit murder, providing material support for terrorism and other charges. Prosecutors said he made a recruiting film, "The Destruction of the American Destroyer U.S.S. Cole," which described the 2000 attack that killed 17 sailors on the ship in the Yemeni port of Aden. The panel of military officers deliberated for less than an hour on the sentence Monday afternoon, after announcing its guilty verdict in the morning. The only other detainee convicted after a Guantánamo trial, Salim Hamdan, a former driver for Mr. bin Laden, is set to complete his five-month sentence next month, after a military judge gave him credit for more than five years awaiting trial.

Last year, an Australian detainee, David Hicks, pleaded guilty to providing material support for terrorism in exchange for a nine-month sentence. Mr. Bahlul's trial came after a series of new challenges to the Pentagon's prosecution efforts. Last week, a military judge undercut the case against another detainee, Mohammed Jawad, by barring the use of his confession to an attack on American soldiers. The judge ruled that it had been obtained through torture by Afghan officials.

Mr. Jawad's case has drawn wide notice because he was a teenager when he was detained in Afghanistan in 2002. His trial, scheduled for Jan. 5, is the only other war-crimes trial expected before President Bush leaves office. The trial of Omar Khadr, a Canadian who was also detained as a teenager, is scheduled for Jan. 26, six days after the start of a new administration.

Pentagon officials have pressed to get the commission system moving quickly, filing charges against nearly two dozen detainees over the last year and expanding the staffs of military lawyers prosecuting and defending the cases. But some lawyers who work on the cases say the prosecution appears uncertain because of the possibility that the next president will close the Guantánamo detention center and stop the trials. Even so, Pentagon officials have said they are moving ahead with the cases and anticipate bringing many of the detainees to trial.

In recent months, several disputes have stalled cases. In September, a prosecutor, Lt. Col. Darrel Vandeveld of the Army Reserve, stepped down, asserting flaws in the fairness of the system. Last month, the Pentagon dropped

charges against five detainees whose cases Colonel Vandeveld had handled. The prosecutors said they planned to file new charges.

The Pentagon official pushing hardest to accelerate the pace of the cases, Brig. Gen. Thomas W. Hartmann, has himself been at the center of disputes that have slowed the prosecutions. Several defense lawyers filed motions seeking his disqualification, claiming he was too aligned with prosecutors. Three military judges agreed, disqualifying General Hartmann from participation, and Pentagon officials said at least two separate investigations of his conduct were under way. A spokesman for the general declined to comment.

The history of the tribunals has been rocky since President Bush ordered military commission trials in November 2001. The plan has been stalled by court challenges and attacks from numerous military critics, including a former chief prosecutor. Colonel Vandeveld is the latest former insider to criticize the system publicly. On Monday, he said from his home in Pennsylvania that he expected to be called as a witness by lawyers for numerous detainees. In the meantime, he said, "the commissions are in such disarray and continue to be in such chaos."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/04/washington/04gitmo.html>

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Miami Herald
November 4, 2008
Pg. 4

Bin Laden Cohort Defiant After Getting Life Sentence

A military jury convicted Osama bin Laden's media secretary of three war crimes charges then condemned the terrorist to serve life in prison; he responded with defiance.

By Carol Rosenberg

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVY BASE, Cuba -- A military jury Monday convicted Osama bin Laden's media secretary of war crimes for creating an al Qaeda recruiting video that prosecutors argued incited suicide bombers. Within hours, the jury ordered him to serve life in prison. The convict, Ali Hamza al Bahlul, about 40, responded by breaking his week-long boycott of the trial with a 50-minute anti-American monologue.

He declared his devotion to Allah, berated the United States for the plight of the Palestinians and, noting his election-eve conviction, announced that radical Islam's war with the West would persist with whoever succeeds President Bush. "We have fought and we fight and will fight any government that governs America," said Bahlul. He waved a poem he wrote in Arabic in praise of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, *The Storm of the Airplanes*, and said he had volunteered for that suicide mission. Until he was convicted, the Yemeni father of four had declined to mount a defense and sat silently, occasionally smiling at the mention of his handiwork.

The jury of nine Navy captains and colonels from the Army, Air Force and Marines had taken only four hours to find him guilty of the 23-count charge sheet. Their deliberations on the sentence lasted only 45 minutes, less time than the prisoner in tan jumpsuit and sneakers took to rail at them. No one testified during the no-contest trial that Bahlul, from Yemen's Red Sea region, ever fired a shot at Americans during his 1999-2001 tenure in Afghanistan. Nor was there evidence that any of the 9/11 hijackers saw his video, *The Destruction of the American Destroyer USS Cole*.

Supported terror

But the Pentagon argued that Bahlul conspired with al Qaeda, supported terror and solicited murder by creating the two-hour video that spliced fiery bin Laden speeches with Muslim bloodshed and stock news footage of the aftermath of the 2000 suicide bombing of the \$1 billion warship. In all, prosecutors called 16 witnesses -- three former jihadists, prison camp interrogators, forensic experts and two victims of the USS Cole attack, notably the father of one of the 17 sailors killed on Oct. 12, 2000, off the coast of Yemen.

Two men came up alongside the Cole in a vessel packed with explosives in Aden harbor, waved, then detonated themselves and their load. "Our son and his 16 mates were minding their own business, refueling in a supposedly friendly harbor and weren't out to hurt anybody and were viciously attacked and murdered," said Gary Swenchonis Sr., his hands shaking and voice trembling after using a cane to reach the tribunal's witness stand.

His son, Gary Jr., 26, was a Navy petty officer and firefighter. The father said the video was especially troubling because it promoted "propaganda, hate, violence" -- values his family abhorred. "He was raised, in short, to respect all people of religious beliefs and that violence was wrong," Swenchonis said. "If you had to go to war, you went to war for your nation -- and you wore a uniform." The Yemeni watched expressionless. In seeking the maximum life sentence, the lead prosecutor, Army Maj. Dan Cowhig, called Bahlul's video "a virus that this man had released on the world." Swenchonis' father said all you have to do is surf the web to see it.

"The message that video sends every time it is played is blood, blood, destruction, destruction," said the prosecutor, asking the jury to sentence Bahlul to life imprisonment. "You can send another message every time this video is played," he said: "The maker of this message will make no more." Bahlul became only the second detainee among the 255 here ever convicted of war crimes before the special terror court Bush ordered set up after the 9/11 attacks.

Convict's corridor

He will now join bin Laden's driver in a convict's corridor at the prison camps. The driver, Salim Hamdan, also of Yemen, was convicted of supporting terror in August. A different jury sentenced him to time served plus the rest of 2008 in prison. In contrast to Hamdan's clear contrition, Bahlul has for years rejected the authority of the U.S. military to judge him, and adopted a self-styled boycott. The jury declined to discuss the case or their deliberations with reporters who had covered the trial. Six of the nine jurors had sentenced al Qaeda foot soldier David Hicks of Australia to the maximum in an earlier plea agreement.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation/story/755101.html>

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Washington Post
November 4, 2008
Pg. 9

U.S. Efforts Divert Iran-Bound Cargo

India Denied Passage to N. Korean Jet

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States thwarted a suspect shipment from North Korea to Iran by persuading the Indian government to deny clearance for the North Korean flight to travel through Indian airspace, U.S. officials said yesterday. Nine weeks after the flight was diverted in August, the Bush administration removed North Korea from the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism in a bid to salvage an accord to end Pyongyang's nuclear programs.

U.S. officials suspect the North Korean plane, an Ilyushin-62 jet owned by the North Korean state airline, was carrying sophisticated technology -- such as ballistic missile parts -- that could be used in a program for weapons of mass destruction. The jet stopped in Burma on Aug. 7 and sought permission to cross Indian airspace to reach Iran. India is not part of the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative, but officials in New Delhi agreed to a U.S. request to deny access, U.S. officials said.

"This was very, very important," said a senior U.S. official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because the incident involved U.S. intelligence. "It was frankly a success that we stopped North Korea from doing this." The incident was first reported by the Wall Street Journal over the weekend. The Indian government declined to comment. A U.N. Security Council resolution, passed in 2006 after Pyongyang tested a nuclear weapon, ordered the suspension of North Korea's ballistic missile sales and purchases. During the talks on its nuclear programs, North Korea has pledged to halt proliferation activities. But questions have persisted over whether such sales continue, including the country's suspected involvement in the building of a nuclear reactor in Syria that Israeli jets destroyed in 2007.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/03/AR2008110302683.html>

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The New York Times

November 7, 2008

North Korea Tries to Show Kim is Well

By CHOE SANG-HUN

SEOUL — North Korea's state-run media have released a flurry of reports of public appearances by its reclusive leader, Kim Jong-il, in what analysts on Thursday described as an effort to demonstrate to his people and the outside world that he is firmly in control, despite widespread rumors of ill health. Since Sunday, news outlets in the North have described three separate appearances by Mr. Kim, 66, who officials in Washington and Seoul have said probably suffered a stroke around August and may have undergone brain surgery. In the latest such report, the North's official news agency, KCNA, said on Thursday that Mr. Kim had attended a concert, where a state choir and opera groups performed numbers like "Please Receive Our Salute!"

Photographs of Mr. Kim that have accompanied these reports have been studied by North Korea watchers in government and media. Aided by neurosurgeons and other experts, they have scrutinized every detail, from Mr. Kim's facial expressions to background scenery, to gauge his condition. "The reports and release of his pictures are carefully calculated and timed," said Ryoo Kihl-jae, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul. "It's Kim Jong-il's way of responding to the intense outside attention to him. He is a man very sensitive to how the outside world views him." But the photographs have raised as many questions as they have answered. Pyongyang's state media did not say when the pictures were taken, confounding the analysts.

Undated pictures released on Oct. 11, for example, showed Mr. Kim inspecting a military unit and looking healthy. But they showed green foliage, while trees on the Korean peninsula at the time were tinged with red and gold. Then, on Sunday, North Korea issued two photos of Mr. Kim, saying he was watching a soccer match. This time, the background vegetation had appropriately autumnal colors. In one picture, he was smiling. The smile, experts said, was symmetrical enough to exclude any serious paralysis of the facial muscles, a common occurrence among people who suffered a stroke. Mr. Kim also had a full head of hair, despite reports that he may have had a brain surgery. But the experts also noted that in both pictures Mr. Kim's left hand looked immobile, either resting limply on his lap or in a pocket. They also noted that he was not wearing the shoes he usually uses to elevate his short stature. Such details led news media to speculate that Mr. Kim may be suffering paralysis on the left side of his body.

On Wednesday, 14 photographs were released that seemed intended to dispel such notions. They showed Mr. Kim walking about and clapping his hands. "The fact that the North is going to such lengths to demonstrate that Kim Jong-il is OK is, ironically, a sign that his health is not normal," Mr. Ryoo said. Other analysts said the timing of recent reports about Mr. Kim were linked to the American presidential election. "Kim Jong-il wants to show that he is in control and that he has no problem being a partner of dialogue with the United States," said Kim Yong-yun, a North Korea expert at Dongguk University. He suggested that the North Korean leader might soon stage a "foolproof" demonstration of his health, for example by releasing a video of his public activities or paying a courtesy call to the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang. China is North Korea's main ally.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/07/world/asia/07kim.html?hp>

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International Herald Tribune/ The Associated Press

Tuesday, November 4, 2008

S Korea: N Korea Building Base for Bigger Missiles

SEOUL, South Korea: A new North Korean missile launch site under construction is designed to fire rockets even more advanced than those already capable of reaching the western U.S., South Korea's defense minister said Tuesday. Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee told parliament that construction of the new site on North Korea's west coast began eight years ago and was about 80 percent complete. The site in the village of Dongchang-ni appears to be designed to launch "a bigger-sized missile or satellite projectile" than rockets deployed from the North's east coast facility. North Korea's clandestine missile program has been a key regional concern, along with its nuclear weapons program.

The country has some 200 "Nodong" missiles with a range of about 800 miles (1,300 kilometers) — far enough to reach Japan — and more than 600 Scud-type, short-range missiles that could reach South Korea. In 2006, the North launched a long-range missile, the Taepodong-2 — considered the country's most advanced rocket — from its east coast site in Musudan-ni. The missile has a range of more than 4,160 miles (6,700 kilometers), putting the western U.S. into striking range, according to the South Korean government.

Experts say the missile has a small payload and is unlikely to be accurate. The 2006 test was considered a failure after the rocket plunged into the ocean shortly after liftoff. Later that year, the communist nation conducted an underground nuclear test. North Korea is believed to have enough plutonium to produce about half a dozen bombs, but experts say it has not acquired the technology needed to mount a nuclear weapon on a missile. Earlier this year, North Korea tested the engine of a long-range missile at the new, western missile site, U.S. and South Korean officials said. That missile is not believed to bear longer-range capability. But the engine test — considered a key step toward development of a new missile — would confirm the North actively is working on developing its long-range missile program. The test measures vibration from the engines so guidance systems can be adjusted accordingly to help make missiles more accurate.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/11/04/asia/AS-NKorea-Missile.php>

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The Inquirer, UK
November 6, 2008

Hackers to Get Death Penalty in Pakistan

Hacked to death

By Stewart Meagher: Thursday,

PAKISTANI PRESIDENT Asif Ali Zardari decreed today that hackers who cause death by 'cyber terrorism' should be executed. "Whoever commits the offence of cyber terrorism and causes death of any person shall be punishable with death or imprisonment for life," states an ordinance published by the state-run news agency APP. And the punishment doesn't just apply to Pakistani hackers. Foreigners will also be subject to the law whether they commit the crime from within the country's borders or on foreign soil.

The ordinance listed several definitions of a "terroristic act" including stealing or copying, or attempting to steal or copy, classified information necessary to manufacture any form of chemical, biological or nuclear weapon. Since Pakistan has had an extradition treaty with the UK since 2006, prospective hackers would be well advised to steer clear of any Islamabad-based web sites. Gary McKinnon must be feeling a bit better about the prospect of spending 70 years sharing a cell with terrorists, child killers and serial rapists in a high-security US jail right now.

<http://www.theinquirer.net/gb/inquirer/news/2008/11/06/hackers-death-penalty-pakistan>

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