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New York Post
January 25, 2008

Saddam Did Crazy 'Pretend' Game With WMDs To Scare Iran

By Hasani Gittens

Saddam Hussein didn't believe the United States would attack Iraq because of weapons of mass destruction - so he concealed the fact that he didn't have any to prevent an *Iranian* invasion, his chief American interrogator has revealed in a bombshell interview.

"He told me he initially miscalculated . . . President Bush's intentions," FBI agent George Piro says in an upcoming "60 Minutes" broadcast on Sunday.

"He thought the United States would retaliate with the same type of attack as we did in 1998 . . . a four-day aerial attack."

Piro, a Lebanese-American and one of the few FBI agents who spoke Arabic, was assigned to debrief Saddam after his December 2003 capture. He ended up spending seven months in the interviews, winning the dictator's confidence along the way.

When it became clear that the US military was about to come marching in, Saddam asked his generals if they could hold the coalition off for two weeks, "and at that point, it would go into what he called the secret war" - a reference to the insurgency.

Even then, the Butcher of Baghdad still wouldn't admit that he had no WMDs.

"For him, it was critical that he was seen as still the strong and defiant Saddam," said Piro. "He thought that [faking having the weapons] would prevent the Iranians from reinvading Iraq."

The two countries fought a bitter war from 1980 to 1988 that took over 1 million lives.

And Piro tells CBS correspondent Scott Pelley that Saddam still had the resources and intentions to restart the weapons program.

"[Saddam] still had the engineers. The folks that he needed to reconstitute his program are still there," said Piro. "He wanted to pursue all of WMD . . . to reconstitute his entire WMD program."

According to Piro, the "entire program" included chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

It was nine months into the war when Saddam was finally found - hiding in a seven-foot hole, covered by bricks and dirt.

His "spider hole" was near a group of dilapidated buildings nine miles from his hometown of Tikrit.

US forces found weapons and about \$750,000 in American \$100 bills with the ex-dictator. They also found two AK-47s and a pistol.

Saddam boasted to Piro that he altered his routine and security to evade coalition forces.

"He told me he changed . . . the way he traveled. He got rid of his normal vehicles. He got rid of the protective detail that he traveled with, really just to change his signature," said Piro.

The madman also told Piro that months before his capture, he had actually been at a bunker in southeast Baghdad when it was bombed.

"He said it in a kind of a bragging fashion that he was there, but that we missed him."

http://www.nypost.com/seven/01252008/news/worldnews/saddam_did_crazy_pretend_game_with_wmd_914166.htm

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Washington Post

January 25, 2008

Pg. 5

Air Force Alters Rules For Handling Of Nuclear Arms

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Air Force has made substantial changes in its handling of nuclear weapons in the wake of a B-52 flight last August during which the pilots and crew were unaware they were carrying six air-launched cruise missiles with nuclear warheads, according to a policy directive approved last week.

A key change is a firm prohibition against storing nuclear armed and nonnuclear armed weapons in the same storage facility, a contributing factor in the Aug. 29 mix-up. A crew at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., using outdated information, picked up six missiles with dummy warheads and six carrying nuclear warheads from the same storage hangar. The missiles eventually were loaded on a B-52 and flown to Louisiana, where the missiles were to be decommissioned.

"Do not co-mingle nuclear and non-nuclear munitions/missiles . . . in the same storage structure, cell or WS3," the new instructions state. (A WS3 is an underground vault.) The instructions were first disclosed by Stephen Aftergood on his Secrecy News Web site.

Although no specific mention is made of the August events, which caused worldwide concern and a broad U.S. review of its procedures for handling nuclear weapons, the document notes that "nuclear weapons require special consideration because of their political and military importance, destructive power, cost and potential consequences of an accident or unauthorized act."

All nonnuclear munitions and missiles are to be identified with placards saying things such as "trainer" or "empty" to "ensure there is a clear distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear munitions/missiles," according to the

instructions. Nonoperational missiles and other armaments stored at sites with nuclear warheads must carry a placard clearly stating that. Last August, the missiles were identified only by a number.

The new procedures outline the responsibilities of officers in charge of nuclear weapons, including Air Force wing commanders and subordinates. As a result of the Aug. 29 failures, four Air Force colonels, including the wing commander at Minot, were relieved of their commands and 65 lower-ranking officers and airmen were disciplined. Wing commanders are now responsible for authorizing any movement of nuclear weapons under their command outside restricted areas and are to appoint a single individual as a munitions accountability system officer and weapons custodian. Each unit must develop a coordinated visual inspection list. Last August, the B-52 crew failed to look at the individual missiles before moving them from their storage area.

When the missiles arrived at the B-52, the crew that loaded them, half under each wing, failed to check the missiles' portholes to determine if a dummy or nuclear warhead was installed. The next morning, Aug. 30, the plane's navigator failed to do a complete check of the missiles, as required, looking under only one wing and not the one where the missiles with real warheads were located.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/24/AR2008012402988.html>

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New York Times
January 29, 2008

Iran Reports Receiving Nuclear Fuel From Russia

TEHRAN (AP) — Iran received the final shipment of fuel from Russia on Monday for its first nuclear plant, state media reported, an important step toward the expected start of the reactor's operations later this year.

The five-ton consignment of enriched uranium arrived at the light-water nuclear power plant at Bushehr on Monday morning, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

“With the arrival of the final shipment, all 82 tons of initial fuel needed for the power plant, together with peripheral equipment, has been shipped from Russia to Iran,” the agency said.

Irina F. Yesipova, a spokeswoman for Atomstroyexport, Russia's state company in charge of building the Bushehr plant, confirmed the shipment.

Iran, which has denied American allegations that it is pursuing nuclear weapons, received the first shipment of fuel from Russia on Dec. 17 after a dispute lasting months between the countries, ostensibly over delayed construction payments for the reactor.

Iran has said that Bushehr, its first nuclear reactor, will start operating this summer, running at half its 1,000-megawatt capacity.

But Ms. Yesipova said a firm date for the plant's start had not been set. “It will be necessary to conduct complex work related to preparations for the launch, with security being the top priority,” she said.

The Iranian government has heralded the shipments as a victory, saying they proved its nuclear program was peaceful, not a cover for weapons development, as claimed by the United States and some of its allies.

The United States initially opposed Russian participation in building the Bushehr reactor and supplying it with fuel, but reversed its position about a year ago to obtain Moscow's support for the first set of United Nations sanctions against Iran.

Washington was also influenced by Iran's agreement to return spent nuclear fuel from the reactor to Russia to ensure it did not extract plutonium to make atomic bombs.

Russia began shipping nuclear fuel to Iran after an American intelligence report released last month that concluded that Tehran had stopped its nuclear weapons program in late 2003 and had not resumed it since. Iran maintains it has never had a weapons program.

The United States and Russia have said the supply of nuclear fuel means Iran has no need to continue its own uranium enrichment program, a process that can provide fuel for a reactor or fissile material for a bomb.

Iran has insisted that it will continue enriching uranium because it needs to provide fuel for a 300-megawatt light-water reactor it is building in the southwestern town of Darkhovin.

Officials have said they plan to generate 20,000 megawatts of electricity through nuclear energy in the next two decades.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/29/world/middleeast/29iran.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=Iran+Reports+Receiving+Nuclear+Fuel+From+Russia&st=nyt&oref=slogin

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Christian Science Monitor
January 30, 2008

At 'JTAGs,' Japan And The U.S. Press Ahead On Missile Defense

The shield has implications for Asia's security balance.

By Associated Press

MISAWA AIR BASE, JAPAN -- One of only four in the world, the Joint Tactical Ground Station sits in a field of snow behind the high fences of this remote base in northern Japan like a windowless trailer home with a few good satellite dishes out back.

It's not impressive. But it's the front line.

In a multibillion-dollar experiment, Japan and the United States are erecting the world's most complex ballistic-missile defense shield, a project that is changing the security balance in Asia and has deep implications for US efforts for a similar strategy in Europe, where the idea has been stalled.

The station here – the US operates three other JTAGs in Germany, Qatar, and South Korea – is the newest piece in the shield. "Japan is one of our strongest allies in the ballistic missile defense arena," said Brig. Gen. John E. Seward, deputy commanding general of operations for the US Army Space and Missile Defense Command.

In a recent mock-up of how it would work, US military satellites detect a flash of heat from a missile range in North Korea and within seconds, computers plot a rough trajectory across the Sea of Japan that ends in an oval splash-zone outlined in red near Japan's main island.

In a real crisis, the next 10 or 15 minutes could be the beginning of an all-out war. Millions could die. Or, two missiles could collide in midair over the ocean.

Washington and Tokyo are banking on the idea that early warning of the kind provided by the Joint Tactical Ground Station, or JTAG, and another state-of-the-art "X-band" radar station recently deployed nearby will lead to the latter. They are pouring resources – US Missile Defense Agency is seeking an \$8 billion budget this year – into establishing a credible warning and response network.

North Korea has made major strides in its development of both nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them to the shores of other countries. In October 2006, it conducted its first nuclear test, and more than a decade ago, it shot a multistage ballistic missile over Japan's main island and well into the Pacific.

Japan's islands arc around the Korean peninsula. The US has some 50,000 troops deployed around Japan.

General Seward said he hopes the alliance with Tokyo on ballistic missile defense will serve as a model for the world. But Washington's efforts to deploy missile interceptors in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic have deeply frayed ties between NATO and Moscow, which argues that the intent is to weaken Russia.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0130/p04s01-woap.html>

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Washington Times
January 31, 2008
Pg. 11

U.S. Troops Exposed To Chlorine Gas

Al Qaeda arms were destroyed in Diyala

By Richard Tomkins, Washington Times

BAQOUBA, Iraq — Two dozen U.S. soldiers and their interpreters were rushed to a hospital by helicopter this week from Diyala province's "bread basket" after being exposed to chlorine gas while destroying an al Qaeda explosives cache.

Military sources said all but four of the 26 persons were quickly returned to duty. The remainder stayed longer at the U.S. military hospital at Ballad, northeast of Baghdad, for additional observation.

"It was really ... scary," said a soldier who was on the scene and requested anonymity. "We saw the strange color to the cloud and ran to help. We had to use litters as bridges across a canal to reach them. It was a 200-[yard] run each way."

Lt. Col. Patrick Mackin, intelligence officer for the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, confirmed the incident. He said it occurred Tuesday about one mile north of Himbus.

The gas was in a metal cylinder, one of 19 found that usually hold propane but that al Qaeda packs with explosives for improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Col. Mackin said photographs taken of the cylinders and other materials found at a previously bombed al Qaeda in Iraq camp, located in a palm grove, indicated that the devices had been buried there for months.

"I'd bet a paycheck that [the chlorine] had been there since summer," he said. "I don't think it indicates a renewed trend by [al Qaeda in Iraq] to use the stuff."

Last summer, and even as late as October, al Qaeda had added a chlorine component to some of its vehicle-born IEDs.

"I think it wasn't as effective as they wanted," Col. Mackin said.

Diyala, northeast of Baghdad, has long been an al Qaeda stronghold. The province's bread basket, a large agricultural area, was a main staging, storage and training area. The discovery of the chlorine cylinder was no surprise, Col. Mackin said.

U.S. and Iraqi forces entered the bread basket Jan. 8 as part of Operation Raider Harvest to rout al Qaeda from its provincial base. Officials said more than 58 al Qaeda suspects have been detained since the start of operations and more than 30 explosives caches discovered, often as the result of anonymous tips from local citizens. Those tips are expected to increase as villagers slowly overcome their fear of al Qaeda sleepers in the area.

U.S. military intelligence said the cache found at the al Qaeda camp Tuesday included 19 gas cylinders, two homemade mortar tubes, a homemade shoulder-fired rocket launcher and tripods for Dishka heavy machine guns. The weapons were found buried just beneath the surface near the camp. Also found in the open was wreckage from what was thought to be a U.S. Predator unmanned aerial vehicle.

A U.S. Explosive Ordnance Disposal team had gathered the material together, set explosive charges to destroy the items and gone a safe distance before they detonated it. Other soldiers were 200 yards away. But neither group knew about the chlorine, which was blown in their direction by gusty winds that day.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20080131/FOREIGN/926048004/1003/foreign>

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New York Times

January 31, 2008

Ahmadinejad Sees Nuclear Energy In Iran By 2009

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN — President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran said Wednesday that his country would produce nuclear energy by next year and condemned Israel as a "filthy entity" that would soon collapse.

He spoke as the United Nations Security Council considered imposing new sanctions on Iran because of its refusal to halt uranium enrichment activities.

"We have been promised that we will have nuclear power this time next year in our power grid," the ISNA news agency quoted him as saying in a speech in Bushehr, the southern city where Iran is building its first nuclear power plant.

A senior official speaking in Tehran gave reporters more precise information and said the Bushehr plant was expected to be operational in October.

The official, Ahmad Fayazbakhsh, managing director of the Production and Development of Nuclear Energy Company, said the date for the plant's electricity to join the national power grid would be announced after the commissioning, the official IRNA news agency reported.

Russia is helping Iran to build the plant and made the eighth and final delivery of its nuclear fuel this week.

However, the leader of the Russian company building the plant, the state-run Atomstroyexport, has said the plant will not be operational until the end of 2008, Reuters reported.

Mr. Fayazbakhsh also said Iran was building a 360-megawatt nuclear power plant in Darkhovain, in the southern Khuzestan Province, without help from any foreign contractors. IRNA quoted him as saying that the plant was expected to become operational in 2017, adding that it was still in the stage of "basic planning," which would continue until October 2010.

Some Western countries and Israel have accused Iran of having a clandestine nuclear weapons program under the guise of a civilian nuclear program. Iran contends that its program is for peaceful purposes and will produce fuel for its nuclear plants.

In his speech, Mr. Ahmadinejad renewed his attack on Israel and warned Western nations to stop supporting it. "I warn you to abandon the filthy Zionist entity, which has reached the end of the line," he said.

"It has lost its reason to be and will sooner or later fall," he said. "The ones who still support the criminal Zionists should know that the occupiers' days are numbered," he said, adding that the countries that support Israel share responsibility in crimes against Palestinians.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/31/world/middleeast/31iran.html?scp=1&sq=Ahmadinejad+Sees+Nuclear+Energy+In+Iran+By+2009&st=nyt>

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Washington Post
January 31, 2008
Pg. 21

What A.Q. Khan Knows

How Pakistan's Proliferator Could Help in Pyongyang

By Selig S. Harrison

Either Kim Jong Il or Pervez Musharraf is lying about whether Pakistan's Dr. Strangelove, Abdul Qadeer Khan, gave centrifuges to North Korea for uranium enrichment. Unless the truth can be established, the hitherto-promising denuclearization negotiations with Pyongyang are likely to collapse.

Khan has been shielded from foreign interrogators since his arrest three years ago for running a global nuclear Wal-Mart. Musharraf wrote in his memoir, "In the Line of Fire," that the former czar of Pakistan's nuclear program provided "nearly two dozen" prototype centrifuges suitable for uranium enrichment experiments to North Korea -- a charge flatly denied by Pyongyang.

"Why don't you invite A.Q. Khan to join the negotiations?" North Korea's U.N. representative, Kim Myong Gil, asked with a broad smile over lunch recently. "Where is the invoice? Give us the evidence."

Former U.N. ambassador John Bolton and other opponents of the denuclearization agreement reached with North Korea last Feb. 13 are seeking to undermine it by reviving the CIA's 2002 assertion that Kim is operating a secret weapons-grade uranium-enrichment plant. Unless Pyongyang reveals the plant's location and dismantles it, Bolton argues, the denuclearization accord should be scrapped.

U.S. negotiator Christopher Hill counters that it was never clear whether such a plant existed. All that the United States knows, Hill said in a little-noticed speech last February at the Brookings Institution, is that North Korea imported certain equipment that could be used for uranium enrichment, notably aluminum tubes from Russia. "It would require a lot more equipment than we know that they have actually purchased," he said, to make the thousands of centrifuges needed for a weapons-grade enrichment facility.

The denuclearization agreement requires North Korea to provide a full declaration of "all its nuclear programs" as part of a series of parallel, reciprocal steps in which the agreement's five other signatories provide energy assistance to North Korea and the United States removes it from its list of terrorist states.

Although Pyongyang denies that it has a uranium enrichment program, it has promised to "address U.S. concerns" by showing that suspect equipment imports were for other purposes if the United States produces evidence of such imports. Regarding the aluminum tubes, the CIA has satellite photos and a bill of lading, and the North Koreans are seeking to prove that the tubes were not used for uranium enrichment. But for the centrifuges, Pakistan has not provided any documents or details that back up Musharraf's claim.

Why is Musharraf determined to keep Khan under wraps?

The official answer in Islamabad is that Pakistan's sovereignty would be affronted by letting U.S. intelligence agents cross-examine him. Khan is regarded as a national hero, and the United States is widely hated in Pakistan for invading Iraq and Afghanistan and for its insensitivity to civilian casualties. If Musharraf wanted to cooperate, however, he could permit the International Atomic Energy Agency to interrogate Khan, as former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto had suggested, or Musharraf could find out what Khan knows and give the United States the information it needs to confront the North Koreans.

Many Pakistanis say Musharraf is stonewalling because he and some of his army generals collaborated with Khan and fear exposure. Another possible explanation is that the documentary evidence does not exist. Still another is that Musharraf changed his position on the centrifuges and invented the "facts" in his memoir to curry favor with the Bush administration; by strengthening its case against North Korea, in this view, he hoped to offset dissatisfaction in Washington with his ineffectual performance in combating al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

This explanation cannot be dismissed, since in a February 2004 New York Times interview Musharraf "emphatically denied" U.S. reports of Pakistani nuclear technology transfers to Pyongyang.

Whatever the explanation, the United States should put the Khan issue at the top of its agenda in Islamabad. At the very least, the IAEA should be able to question him about what he gave not only to North Korea but also to Iran and Syria.

If Musharraf's allegation can be substantiated, North Korea would have to cooperate in establishing the facts in order for the denuclearization process to be completed. Pyongyang might well say that the centrifuges were obtained for a research and development program. North Korea, like Iran, is permitted under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to make low-enriched uranium fuel for civilian reactors if it accepts IAEA inspection safeguards to prevent weapons-grade enrichment. Pyongyang is unlikely to surrender its plutonium stockpile and move to full

denuclearization unless this right is accepted and unless it is promised light-water plutonium reactors for electricity when and if its nuclear weapons program is dismantled.

Selig S. Harrison, director of the Asia program at the Center for International Policy, has visited North Korea 10 times and is the author of "Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement." He has covered Pakistan since 1951, including for The Post.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/30/AR2008013003214.html>

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(Editor's Note: Hyperlinks for referenced report and executive summary follow article.)

Washington Post

'Appalling Gap' Found in Homeland Defense Readiness

National Guard, Reserve Forces Lack Sufficient Personnel, Training to Respond to Crisis in U.S., Report Says

By Ann Scott Tyson

Washington Post Staff Writer

Friday, February 1, 2008; Page A04

The U.S. military is not prepared to meet catastrophic threats at home, and it is suffering from an "appalling gap" in forces able to respond to chemical, biological and nuclear strikes on U.S. soil, according to a congressional commission report released yesterday.

The situation is rooted in severe readiness problems in National Guard and reserve forces, which would otherwise be well-suited to respond to domestic crises but lack sufficient personnel and training, as well as \$48 billion in equipment because of deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, according to a report by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves.

Guard readiness has continued to slide since last March, when the panel found that 88 percent of Army National Guard units were rated "not ready," said retired Marine Maj. Gen. Arnold L. Punaro, the commission chairman.

"We think there is an appalling gap in readiness for homeland defense, because it will be the Guard and reserve that have to respond for these things," he said in an interview, noting that the reserves are present in 3,000 U.S. communities. The commission, which was established in 2005, has 12 members, including several other former military officers.

"Because the nation has not adequately resourced its forces designated for response to weapons of mass destruction, it does not have sufficient trained, ready forces available," the report said. "This is an appalling gap that places the nation and its citizens at greater risk."

The Pentagon and Congress must transform and upgrade the nation's military reserves into an operational force with many of the same capabilities as active-duty forces, said the 400-page report. The military must also carry out the same kind of exhaustive contingency planning for domestic attacks and catastrophes as it does for those overseas, said the report, which includes 95 recommendations.

"You shouldn't be dealing with WMD scenarios with 52 pickup," Punaro said, referring to a joke that involves scattering a deck of cards. "It needs to be part of the deliberative planning process."

The commission criticized steps taken by the Defense Department and Congress to create an operational reserve force as "reactive" and "timid," saying there has been no serious debate on the matter vital to national security. Greater funding is needed to fully train and equip the military's 836,000 selected reserves so they can operate interchangeably with the active-duty personnel, Punaro said. He noted, however, that the reserves are highly cost-effective, contributing about 44 percent of U.S. military personnel but consuming only 9 percent of the Pentagon budget.

"It's a food fight over resources going on right now," Punaro said. "DOD can't have it both ways. They can't say they want it, 'but only if we don't have to pay for it,' " he said.

Punaro said he expects a "quick turnaround" on the latest recommendations, praising Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates as a "bureaucracy buster" who embraced 20 of 23 proposals the commission made in its interim report last March.

The panel also recommended that the Pentagon provide the bulk of support to civilian authorities if local responders are overwhelmed by a major catastrophe; that state governors be allowed to command federal troops in response to disasters; and that the head or deputy head of U.S. Northern Command, which leads the Pentagon's homeland defense efforts, be a Guard or reserve officer.

Since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, nearly 600,000 reservists have served in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries as part of the anti-terrorism campaign, and the use of reservists has risen more than fivefold, according to the report.

Without a strong reserve force, the nation would be more likely to have to resort to a draft, which would be unfeasible both politically and militarily, Punaro said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/31/AR2008013101833.html?hpid=moreheadlines>

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Commission on the National Guard and Reserves: Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st-Century Operational Force - Final Report Executive Summary

January 31, 2008

<http://www.cngr.gov/Final%20Report/CNGRFinalReportExecutiveSummary.pdf>

Commission on the National Guard and Reserves: Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st-Century Operational Force - Final Report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense

January 31, 2008

<http://www.cngr.gov/Final%20Report/CNGR%20Final%20Report.pdf>

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Military Times

Sweeping changes recommended for reserves

By William H. McMichael - Staff writer

Posted : Friday Feb 1, 2008 7:42:41 EST

Active and reserve service members would have to wait until age 57 or longer before drawing retired pay under a controversial recommendation from a congressionally chartered commission.

The proposal would spell the end of the current active-duty plan that provides nondisability retirement immediately after completing a minimum of 20 years of service.

The plan comes from the final report of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve, which went beyond its original charter to review the structure and management of the reserve components by also recommending an overhaul of personnel policies for active members.

Under current retirement rules, an active-duty member is eligible for retired pay immediately after completing a minimum of 20 years of service, which can be as young as 37 for someone who enlisted at age 17. Reservists, however, must wait until age 60 to draw retired pay, although a law signed Jan. 28 by President Bush allows reservists to draw retired pay 90 days earlier than age 60 for every 90 days of mobilization in support of a contingency operation.

Under the commission's plan, a revamped retired system would grant limited retirement benefits beginning after only 10 years of service, although actual retirement pay would not begin until age 62. Those who serve at least 20 years could receive retirement pay at age 60, and those who serve 30 years at age 57.

Under the plan, service members could begin drawing retirement pay at earlier ages, but the annuity would be reduced 5 percent for each year that a member is under the statutory minimum retirement age, which the commission said would be in line with the Federal Employees Retirement System.

For reserve component members, retired pay would continue to be calculated on the number of creditable retirement years, based on earning at least 50 retirement points per creditable year.

The commission concluded that combining the training, promotion and management of active and reserve troops into one integrated manpower system is the only way the nation's military can become a truly efficient operational force.

"The increasing cost of personnel, and the challenges of recruiting and retaining qualified individuals, will, we believe, inevitably require reductions in the size of the active force," states the 432-page report, released today. "This shrinking active force will necessarily be accompanied by an increased reliance on reserve forces for operations, particularly for homeland missions. The overall effectiveness of those forces will depend on greater integration of the reserves with the active component."

The commission argued that modifying 20-year retirements would give the services an incentive to retain service members whom they want to keep beyond 10 years but less than 20. Additional pay or bonuses would be needed to keep such troops in beyond 10 years in order to maintain retention rates.

“As part of the reformed retirement system, retention would be encouraged by making service members eligible to receive ‘gate pay’ at pivotal years of service,” the report said. “Such pay would come in the form of a bonus equal to a percentage of annual basic pay at the end of the year of service, at the discretion of the services.”

In addition, the report said Congress should expand current law to permit all service members to receive up to 5 percent of annual basic pay in matching government contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan. Service members currently receive no government matching funds for TSP contributions.

“The government’s contribution would vest at 10 years of service, and the Thrift Savings Plan benefit would be portable and thus capable of being rolled over into a civilian 401(k) account,” the report said.

Among the report’s other recommendations:

- * The military’s promotion system should be competency-based versus time-based.
- * Active and reserve officer personnel management systems should be merged into a single system.
- * The number of duty statuses should be reduced from 29 to just two — on active duty or off.
- * The Defense Department should implement a combined pay and personnel system to eliminate problems with incorrect pay, low data quality, multiple personnel files and inaccurate accounting of credit for service.

“We need to look at our manpower assets with a totally integrated approach,” said Arnold Punaro, chairman of the commission, which has spent more than a year compiling its report.

The recruiting and job market landscape has shifted in dramatic ways, the commission said, which means the Defense Department “must recruit, train and maintain a technologically advanced force in an era that will be characterized by ever-increasing competition for a shrinking pool of qualified individuals whose expectations about career paths and mobility are changing dramatically.”

“The reserve components’ role in such a new strategy will be key,” the report states.

For active as well as reserve service members, such a system would create a “seamless” transition to and from active duty — “on-ramps” and “off-ramps,” as Navy personnel officials have described the concept. Basing promotions on competency rather than time would keep troops competitive within the system.

The 95 recommendations in the report also include a call for the reserves to be reorganized into two formal categories: operational and strategic reserve forces.

The operational reserve would consist of Selected Reserve units and individual mobilization augmentees who would deploy periodically. The strategic reserve would include Selected Reserve personnel and augmentees not scheduled for rotational active-duty tours and the “most ready, operationally current and willing members of the Individual Ready Reserve.”

The commission also calls for eliminating today’s Standby Reserve category and said members who are not “viable mobilization assets should be excluded from the total reserve force.”

The Defense Department would have to consistently provide the support needed to ensure the sustained viability of both forces, and Congress and the Pentagon would determine the missions each would perform.

“There used to be an understanding that if you were ready for the away game, you were ready for the home game,” Punaro said. “Most everyone admits that’s not the case anymore. We need a very ready force at home in peacetime, just like we need a ready force for the overseas mission.”

The reserves were conceived as a strategic force that would only be called to active duty in national emergencies. But they have morphed over the past 18 years, beginning with the 1991 Persian Gulf War and spurred by the military drawdown of the 1990s, into an operational reserve that now regularly is called upon to meet the demands of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“It’s clear that if you hadn’t had an operational Guard and Reserve, you’d have had to go back to the draft, which I think everyone agrees is ... pretty unacceptable,” Punaro said.

The commission concluded that the reserves will play a “growing role” as an operational force in the coming years and that properly organizing and supporting citizen-soldiers is “well worth further investment to secure our nation’s future.”

The commission also called on Congress to mandate that the Guard and reserve “have the lead role in and form the backbone of Defense Department operations” within U.S. boundaries; that the department should ensure such forces “are manned, trained and equipped to the highest levels of readiness”; and that the department should develop protocols to allow state governors to direct federal military assets responding to an emergency, such as Hurricane Katrina.

“The homeland threat is real, and the Guard and Reserve has a significant operational advantage over the active component because they’re located in 3,000 communities around the country — plus, they have the crossover skills needed,” Punaro said.

“Because you don’t need that every day, it’s an economic bargain for the taxpayers to have that capability forward-deployed in the communities.”

The commission also made a number of suggestions that would improve benefits for reservists. It asked Congress to allow reservists who have been activated for a specified period of time to use their Montgomery GI Bill benefits after their discharge if they remain subject to recall and supply the Defense Department with accurate contact information. Current law does not allow reservists to use the benefit if they transfer from the Selected Reserve to the Individual Ready Reserve.

Punaro said he is “very bullish” on the prospects for the commission’s work to receive serious attention.

He said Defense Secretary Robert Gates is “very, very concerned and supportive of all these homeland missions. Half of the 95 [recommendations] can be done immediately.”

Forty will require congressional or presidential action, according to the report.

In the short term, Punaro said, U.S. Northern Command, which is responsible for command and control of the military’s homeland defense efforts, needs to meet with the Homeland Security Department to discuss requirements needed to respond to DHS’s 15 National Planning Scenarios.

“There hasn’t been enough progress on this,” Punaro said.

DoD should also identify the reserve forces that would be given the mission of catastrophic response, and then properly staff, equip and train them.

“There’s nothing keeping anyone from getting started on those immediately,” Punaro said.

http://www.militarytimes.com/news/2008/01/military_guardreserve_080131w/

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Air Force Times

DoD: No ‘appalling’ readiness gap

By William H. McMichael - Staff writer

Posted : Friday Feb 1, 2008 17:38:50 EST

The Defense Department on Friday rejected the conclusion in a congressionally chartered commission’s report that there is an “appalling gap” in the nation’s ability to respond to nuclear, chemical or biological attack.

“I think the choice of that word was unfortunate and inaccurate,” said Paul McHale, assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense, during a hastily called news conference the day after the Jan. 31 release of the final report by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves — and several news stories that highlighted the charge.

“We have forces that would be part of a catastrophic response that are superbly trained,” McHale said, citing the Marine Corps’ Chemical-Biological Incident Response Force, and the National Guard’s 53 certified Civil Support Teams and 17 Emergency Response Force Packages.

McHale noted that the Defense Department is at the final stage of defining and identifying resources needed for 15,000-member Chemical, Biological and Nuclear Consequence Management Response Forces that will be trained and equipped to respond to a domestic attack using weapons of mass destruction. McHale did not say how many of these teams would be formed.

But McHale admitted that the Defense Department does not yet have plans to deal with each of 15 national planning scenarios developed by the Department of Homeland Security. Those will be in place “one year from now,” he said.

At the same time, McHale said, “No level of preparation will ever be enough. These are challenges of the first magnitude. We can never be adequately prepared, because to be adequately prepared implies a sense of complacency. And we will not be complacent.”

http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2008/02/military_guardreserve_reportreaction_080201w/

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Washington Post

February 2, 2008

Pg. 16

U.S., Poland Closer To Deal On Missile Defense

By Karen DeYoung, Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States and Poland broke a logjam yesterday in negotiations over U.S. plans to build a missile defense shield in Eastern Europe, with the Bush administration committing “in principle” to help Poland modernize its armed forces.

Poland is "satisfied that our arguments have got through," Foreign Affairs Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said. At a news conference yesterday with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Sikorski said that "separate" dialogues would now continue "both on the missile defense base and on the modernization."

Talks on the Pentagon's plan to place 10 missile interceptors in Poland stalled after the new Polish government, which took office in November, proved less receptive to the shield than its predecessor. With the public increasingly opposed to Warsaw's participation and neighboring Russia threatening to counter with missiles aimed at Poland, Prime Minister Donald Tusk had said he was in "no hurry" for an agreement.

The Pentagon reacted coolly last month when Poland suggested Washington should help rebuild its air defense systems to counter Moscow and should consider signing a bilateral security agreement before negotiations on missile defense continued. Poland is the top European recipient of U.S. military assistance, totaling \$750 million since 2001.

Yesterday, however, Rice said that "the United States is very committed to the modernization of Polish forces." She said that progress had also been made on missile defense during her talks with Sikorski, and that discussions would continue when Tusk visits President Bush in early March and at NATO's summit in Bucharest in April.

The administration's eagerness for missile defense talks with Poland reflects its hopes of an accord with the Czech Republic, where the Pentagon plans to base a radar component of the system. Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek will visit Bush a week before Tusk.

Sikorski spokesman Piotr Paszkowski said yesterday's talks established a framework for negotiations but that there was "definitely no agreement" on missile defense. "Ultimately, we will have to sell it to the public" and to the Polish parliament, he said, and the government could "make a more convincing case for going ahead if the bottom line would also be that Polish defense capacity has also been strengthened."

Poland wants to upgrade its aging air defense capabilities with Patriot missile batteries facing Russia and Belarus. It saw its case strengthened not only by Russian threats, but also by the Bush administration's desire to solidify a missile defense deal before the end of the Bush presidency.

In a meeting yesterday with Washington Post editors and reporters, Sikorski said there is "no reason for [U.S.-Polish] relations to be less excellent" than under the previous government. While Poland is withdrawing its remaining troops from Iraq, he noted, it is adding 400 troops to its 1,200 combat forces deployed in Afghanistan. Sikorski said Poland did not share the administration's view of the Iranian threat as sufficient reason for the missile shield, adding that "Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran, even though they are geographically closer, are mentally distant" from Poland.

Warsaw's efforts, he said, were "an investment in our friendship and the unspoken transatlantic bargain. We will help you with your security concerns, provided you continue to reassure us" of the U.S. commitment to NATO and Poland's security.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/01/AR2008020101910.html>

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Los Angeles Times

February 3, 2008

Pg. 1

Al Qaeda Said To Focus On WMDs

A key operative and chemical engineer who was reported to have been slain is alive and leading the effort, officials say.

By Josh Meyer, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — After a U.S. airstrike leveled a small compound in Pakistan's lawless tribal regions in January 2006, President Pervez Musharraf and his intelligence officials announced that several senior Al Qaeda operatives had been killed, and that the top prize was an elusive Egyptian who was believed to be a chemical weapons expert.

But current and former U.S. intelligence officials now believe that the Egyptian, Abu Khabab Masri, is alive and well -- and in charge of resurrecting Al Qaeda's program to develop or obtain weapons of mass destruction.

Given the problems with previous U.S. intelligence assessments of weapons of mass destruction, officials are careful not to overstate Al Qaeda's capabilities, and they emphasize that there is much they don't know because of the difficulty in getting information out of the mountainous area of northwest Pakistan where the network has reestablished itself.

But they say Al Qaeda has regenerated at least some of the robust research and development effort that it lost when the U.S. military bombed its Afghanistan headquarters and training camps in late 2001, and they believe it is once again trying to develop or obtain chemical, biological, radiological and even nuclear weapons to use in attacks on the United States and other enemies.

For now, the intelligence officials believe, that effort is largely focused on developing and using cyanide, chlorine and other poisons that are unlikely to cause the kind of mass-casualty attack that is usually associated with weapons of mass destruction.

Intelligence officials say they base their current assessments on anecdotal evidence gleaned from electronic intercepts, information provided by informants and captured Al Qaeda members and the tracking of money flows and militant websites. One international counter-terrorism official said there were indications that some operatives had received immunizations to protect themselves against biological agents.

Abu Khabab, whose real name is Midhat Mursi al-Sayid Umar, is believed to have set up rudimentary labs with at least a handful of aides, and to have provided a stable environment in which scientists and researchers can experiment with chemicals and other compounds, said several former intelligence officials familiar with Al Qaeda's weapons program.

Recent intelligence shows that Abu Khabab, 54, is training Western recruits for chemical attacks in Europe and perhaps the United States, just as he did when he ran the "Khabab Camp" at Al Qaeda's sprawling Darunta training complex in Afghanistan's Tora Bora region before the Sept. 11 attacks, according to one senior U.S. intelligence official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the CIA's intelligence is classified.

Some experts questioned how far Al Qaeda could get in reconstituting a weapons program in the mountains of Pakistan.

"They are hemmed in in a way that makes it hard to do," said John V. Parachini, a senior analyst on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction at Rand Corp. "It's hard to get the industrial infrastructure together to do these things, and it's hard to get people that have the expertise to fashion these materials into weapons of mass destruction."

Several international counter-terrorism officials concurred with the U.S. intelligence assessment of Al Qaeda's weapons' effort. Raphael Perl, who heads the Action Against Terrorism Unit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, said it is widely assumed that Al Qaeda developed chemical weapons years ago, and that if it doesn't have biological capabilities already, "they are certainly not far from it."

Given that Abu Khabab "has the technical knowledge," he said, "it's very, very clear that they are working both in the chemical and biological fields."

Pakistani Information Minister Nisar Memon refused to comment on Abu Khabab and Al Qaeda's weapons program, but security officials from three Pakistani intelligence agencies, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed that he is alive.

The senior U.S. intelligence official described Al Qaeda's effort as "a very small, very compartmented program, and not nearly on the scale of what they had going on in Afghanistan, because you don't have the size, the security, you don't have the ease of movement" that the Taliban government provided.

Chris Quillen, a former CIA analyst specializing in Al Qaeda's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, said the network's program in Pakistan could have made significant progress without authorities knowing about it by operating in small compounds, as it did in Afghanistan.

"I am not saying the programs are great and ready for an attack tomorrow," said Quillen, who left the agency in August 2006 and is now a U.S. government intelligence contractor. "But whatever they lost in the 2001 invasion, they are back to that level at this point."

That is a source of major frustration at the CIA, which a few years back identified at least 40 people that it wanted to kill, capture or question about their suspected involvement in Al Qaeda's weapons program, Quillen and others said. They said at least half of those suspects remain at large.

Abu Khabab's ties to terrorism date to at least the mid-1980s, when he was a prominent member of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad organization led by Ayman Zawahiri, who merged the group with Al Qaeda. Over the years he has trained hundreds of fighters at Al Qaeda's camps on how to use explosives, poisons and rudimentary chemical weapons, according to FBI documents.

Educated in Egypt as a chemical engineer, Abu Khabab has no formal training in biological or nuclear weapons, intelligence officials say. But he has ended up in charge of the weapons program at least in part because some operatives believed to be more knowledgeable about biological and nuclear weapons have been captured or killed. Abu Khabab was described by several intelligence officials as a cranky, showboating self-promoter as well as one of its top explosives experts. He has had a stormy relationship with the two top Al Qaeda leaders, Osama bin Laden and Zawahiri, and their top command, in part because of his ego and independent streak, those current and former intelligence officials said.

Nevertheless, Zawahiri tapped Abu Khabab in 1999 to head an unconventional weapons program code-named "Al Zabadi," Arabic for fermented milk. Within months, he had made "significant progress," according to Al Qaeda computer files found after the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan.

U.S. authorities found materials at the Darunta complex and elsewhere in Afghanistan that showed that Al Qaeda was aggressively pursuing weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and biological devices, and that it was

only a few years away from developing an anthrax weapon. By 2002, Abu Khabab is believed to have fled to Chechnya or the Pankisi Gorge region in Georgia to resume training militants in the use of chemical weapons, before ending up in Pakistan.

In December 2002, Al Qaeda allegedly dispatched a strike team to New York to use a device called a *mubtakkar* -- or "invention" -- to disperse cyanide gas in subway cars, potentially killing dozens of people, the senior intelligence official said. Several officials said they suspect Abu Khabab played a role in its development.

But Zawahiri scuttled the plot, saying, "We have something better in mind," former CIA Director George Tenet wrote in his 2007 autobiography. Five years later, the U.S. government still does not know what "better" device Zawahiri was referring to, said Quillen and the senior U.S. intelligence official.

Abu Khabab also developed "contact poisons" that could be rubbed on a doorknob or some other common area, and experimented with adding crushed glass to the mixture to help get it into a potential victim's bloodstream, a former WMD case officer at the CIA said.

In recent years, Abu Khabab also began lobbying for more funding to pursue what he claimed would be a successful program to build a nuclear device, according to the former CIA officer and other U.S. officials familiar with the intelligence.

"He has for years told Al Qaeda that he could do it, 'Just give me the money,' " said the former CIA officer, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of rules preventing former agency officials from discussing details of specific cases. "He's full of crap. He can't. But he can certainly build a good RDD" -- a radiological dispersal device. Also known as "dirty bombs," radiological dispersal devices have conventional explosives wrapped around radioactive material. When detonated, they can cause some injuries, and potentially widespread contamination and tremendous psychological and economic damage.

In June 2004, the U.S. government had tracked Abu Khabab to Pakistan and issued a \$5 million reward for information leading to his capture. The wanted poster said he had been distributing training manuals for making chemical and biological weapons.

In January 2006, U.S. officials caught wind of a purported meeting in Damadola, near the Afghanistan border, that Abu Khabab and other senior Al Qaeda operatives, maybe even Zawahiri, were to attend.

The CIA fired Hellfire missiles from Predator drones at the site, killing as many as 18 people, including at least 13 civilians. Soon after, Musharraf said a son-in-law of Zawahiri and Abu Khabab were among the dead.

Despite Musharraf's claims, the CIA concluded several months later that Abu Khabab was alive, based on evidence from human intelligence and electronic intercepts of conversations in which people talked about him in present tense.

The CIA dispatched additional agents into northwest Pakistan in the summer of 2006, including one specifically responsible for finding Abu Khabab, who officials believe had gone deep into hiding, communicating only by courier.

"I and many other CIA people considered [him] particularly dangerous, given his portfolio for Al Qaeda," said Arthur Keller, one CIA case officer sent to the tribal areas to track Al Qaeda.

"I would have been happy to help him on his way to paradise by any available means," said Keller, who left the CIA later that year, "but the opportunity never arose."

Times staff writer Laura King in Islamabad, Pakistan, contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-khabab3feb03.1.1300705.story>

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Washington Post

February 3, 2008

Pg. 2

Pentagon Disputes Report On National Guard, Reserves

By Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Pentagon issued sharp criticism Friday of a new congressionally commissioned report on the National Guard and reserves, calling "fundamentally flawed" its assertion that the U.S. military is not adequately prepared to respond to nuclear, biological and chemical attacks on the United States.

"While there are positive elements of the commission's report, in most cases echoing and validating actions already well underway within the Department of Defense, the core elements of the report are fundamentally flawed," said Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Paul McHale.

The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves reported Thursday that the U.S. military's lack of "sufficient[ly] trained, ready forces available" to respond to nuclear, biological or chemical attacks "is an appalling gap that places the nation and its citizens at greater risk."

McHale strongly rebutted that charge. "Our department's catastrophic-response capabilities are the best-funded, best-equipped, best-trained in the world. There is no serious argument to the contrary," he said, adding that "no matter how good we are, we must get better."

McHale added that some of the commission's specific recommendations would harm the National Guard and reserves, such as changing the National Guard's mission to responding exclusively to domestic disasters or cutting the pay of reservists. "We think that's wrong," he said. "Converting the National Guard into a domestic disaster-response force, training on half pay, would be a problematic and counterproductive course of action," he said. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/02/AR2008020202043.html>

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(Editor's Note: Hyperlink for referenced report follows article.)

Washington Times

February 5, 2008

Pg. 3

N. Korea Would Sell Nukes To Terrorists

Report reveals 2005 statement

By Bill Gertz, Washington Times

North Korea threatened to export nuclear weapons to international terrorists in 2005, according to a U.S. intelligence report made public yesterday.

The report to Congress on arms proliferation was produced in 2006 and also said al Qaeda is developing chemical and biological weapons for use in Iraq and Afghanistan and continues to seek nuclear or radiological bombs.

On Syria, the report said that the Damascus government has nuclear research facilities at Dayr, Al Hajar and Dubaya, and that U.S. intelligence agencies "continue to monitor Syrian nuclear intentions with concern."

On North Korea, the report expressed continued worries about threats from the reclusive communist regime to export nuclear arms. In April 2005, North Korea told a U.S. academic, who was not identified further, that Pyongyang "could transfer nuclear weapons to terrorists if driven into a corner," the report stated. It was the first time that the U.S. intelligence community disclosed the basis for concerns about North Korea's supplying terrorists with nuclear arms.

The threat followed a statement from a North Korean official made during the six-party nuclear talks in April 2003 warning that Pyongyang could export nuclear weapons.

Additionally, the report disclosed that in May 2004, inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency recovered 2 tons of uranium hexafluoride from Libya thought to have originated in North Korea. The uranium gas is used in centrifuges to produce highly enriched uranium for bombs.

North Korea detonated its first nuclear device in October 2006 and the regime's official media frequently asserts that the U.S. is preparing a pre-emptive nuclear attack.

On al Qaeda, the report said a wide array of intelligence reports had revealed that the Islamist group and other terrorists were continuing to pursue "chemical and biological capabilities for use in attacks against Western targets, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan."

"Rhetoric from these groups continued to focus on the need for spectacular attacks, but actual attempts were few during this time period and consisted of small-scale attacks using commercially available toxic industrial chemicals," the report said.

The annual report to Congress covers the period from January to December 2005 and is known as the "721 report" after the section of the 1997 law requiring U.S. intelligence agencies to report on the acquisition of technology on weapons of mass destruction and advanced conventional arms.

Al Qaeda in Iraq sought to improve its chemical capabilities, working with other Iraq-based terrorists. Insurgents carried out one "poisoning" in May 2005, by injecting watermelons with common chemicals and distributing the fruit to Iraqi soldiers south of Mosul.

"Some soldiers became ill, but there were no reported fatalities," the report said.

The report identified "key suppliers" of weapons and technology as China, North Korea and Russia and noted that China supplied Pakistan, Iran and North Korea with ballistic missiles and support. Russia supplied ballistic missile goods and technology to China, Iran, India and North Korea and also sold Iskander-E short-range missiles, the report said.

On Iran, the report said Tehran "sought foreign materials, training, equipment, and know-how during 2005 focused particularly on entities in China, North Korea, Russia, and Europe."

The report was produced before the National Intelligence Estimate on Iran made public in December that stated Tehran suspended its nuclear weapons program in 2003 but is continuing work on uranium enrichment and could restart the arms program. The NIE reversed a 2005 estimate that said Iran was building nuclear arms in secret.
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20080205/NATION/163481673/1002>

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Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions, 1 January to 31 December 2005

Acquisition by Country

As required by Section 721 of the FY 1997 Intelligence Authorization Act, the following are country summaries of acquisition activities (solicitations, negotiations, contracts, and deliveries) related to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and advanced conventional weapons (ACW) that occurred from 1 January through 31 December 2005. This report focuses on key countries of concern that we assess are seeking WMD capabilities. . .

(For complete report, please click on link below.)

<http://www.dni.gov/reports/CDA%2011-14-2006.pdf>

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