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Washington Post
September 13, 2008
Pg. 8

Unified Nuclear Command Urged

By Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post Staff Writer

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates yesterday called on the Air Force to establish clear and unified control over the nation's nuclear arsenal, after a new report by a Pentagon task force concluded that the service had neglected its stewardship of such weapons for more than a decade.

"Today no senior leader in the Air Force 'owns' the nuclear mission," concluded the eight-member task force, appointed by Gates and chaired by former defense secretary James R. Schlesinger. "The current organization is not properly structured."

The task force recommended yesterday that the Air Force designate a new Air Force Strategic Command, which would replace the current Air Force Space Command, and make it accountable for the nuclear mission. It also called for all Air Force bombers to be placed under a single command.

Gates, speaking at a Pentagon news conference where Schlesinger outlined the report, stressed that unity of command over nuclear weapons and materials is vital, adding that "the task force . . . makes a strong case in this respect for a new command." He said no decision had been made on the command proposal.

The push to centralize Air Force management of the nuclear force weapons follows two serious mishaps involving U.S. nuclear weapons -- an August 2007 incident when the Air Force unknowingly flew nuclear warheads between North Dakota and Louisiana, and the mistaken shipment in 2006 of ballistic missile fuses to Taiwan.

Subsequent investigations led Gates to fire the Air Force's two top civilian and military leaders in June. Gates also established the task force to examine nuclear weapons management in two reports -- the first focused on the Air Force and the second on the Defense Department.

Yesterday, Gates said he considers nuclear weapons management the military's "most sensitive mission" and one critical to maintaining the confidence of foreign allies in the U.S. nuclear deterrent.

Schlesinger said some of the roughly 30 nations that rely on the U.S. nuclear umbrella -- including NATO allies as well as Australia and New Zealand -- have "expressed misgivings about whether or not they feel comfortable under the umbrella." That could lead them to acquire their own nuclear weapons, he said. The Air Force and Pentagon must "resuscitate their confidence in the credibility of the nuclear umbrella," he said.

The Schlesinger task force found that the Air Force, the main steward of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, has neglected that mission, starting with the dissolution in 1991 of the Strategic Air Command.

"There has been an unambiguous, dramatic, and unacceptable decline in the Air Force's commitment to perform the nuclear mission and, until very recently, little has been done to reverse it," the report said. Nuclear deterrence is no longer taught at the War College, it noted.

"There is a shortage of security personnel," Schlesinger said. "There is a shortage of maintenance people. There is a shortage of those who supervise the nuclear establishment."

To fill the voids in the short term, the Air Force should move 1,500 to 2,000 airmen into nuclear-related jobs, and it is budgeting roughly \$1.5 billion for 2010 to shore up the mission, Schlesinger said.

But the report concluded that although the Air Force is currently tracking "more than 180 corrective actions" to fix immediate problems, "it will take a concerted and sustained commitment by the Air Force leadership at all levels to restore the culture and ethos of nuclear excellence."

Asked if other top Air Force officers would face reprimands, Gates said acting Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley and Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz are "reviewing the recommendations" for disciplinary action.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/12/AR2008091203157.html>

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New York Times
September 13, 2008
Pg. 15

Panel Urges Air Force To Unify Nuclear Command

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Pentagon advisory group condemned the Air Force for a drastic deterioration in managing the nation's nuclear arsenal and recommended Friday that it consolidate nuclear responsibilities under one command.

The decline has eroded international confidence in the United States' ability to provide a nuclear umbrella of protection, the task force said in rolling out more than 30 recommended changes in the structure, financing, inspections and staffing of the Air Force's nuclear responsibilities.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates told reporters on Friday at the Pentagon that the advisory group had made a strong argument for unifying its nuclear management.

"One of the concerns that I had," based on previous revelations about shortcomings in the Air Force's stewardship of its nuclear arsenal, "is the lack of unity of command and not having one person or organization accountable for the overall mission," Mr. Gates said.

He added that while he was not sure what the right answer was, the Air Force was considering the idea.

The latest review is one of several studies and reports coming after a series of Air Force blunders in its handling of nuclear-related materials — missteps that prompted Mr. Gates to dismiss the top civilian and military leaders of the service earlier this year.

After Mr. Gates spoke, James R. Schlesinger, a former defense and energy secretary who was chairman of the advisory panel, told reporters that the Air Force's division of command over nuclear matters had led to a deterioration in control, staffing and resources.

The panel's report concluded that there had been "an unambiguous, dramatic and unacceptable decline in the Air Force's commitment to perform the nuclear mission and, until very recently, little has been done to reverse it."

Panel members, Mr. Schlesinger said, were surprised that the situation had declined more than they had anticipated.

Mr. Schlesinger said a main recommendation of his group was that the Air Force convert its existing Air Force Space Command, which has responsibility for the service's land-based nuclear missiles but not other nuclear weapons, into an organization called Air Force Strategic Command. That entity would "be held accountable for the efficacy of the nuclear mission," he said.

Under the existing Air Force structure, responsibility for the bombers and fighters that can deliver nuclear weapons is held by Air Combat Command, and Air Mobility Command has responsibility for the refueling aircraft used to operate with the nuclear bombers and fighters.

Mr. Schlesinger said the new plan would also shift control of the supply chain from the Defense Logistics Agency to the Air Force.

In early June, Mr. Gates dismissed the Air Force chief of staff, Gen. T. Michael Moseley, and the Air Force secretary, Michael W. Wynne, blaming them for failing to fully address several nuclear-related incidents, including the mistaken shipment to Taiwan of four electrical fuses for ballistic missile warheads.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/13/washington/13military.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

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San Diego Union-Tribune
September 13, 2008

Mexico, U.S. Find No Al-Qaeda Links Since 9/11 Attacks

Border not seen as terrorist entry point

By E. Eduardo Castillo, Associated Press

MEXICO CITY – Mexico says it has arrested 12 people on terrorism charges in the seven years since the Sept. 11 attack on the United States, but an official said none were linked to Muslim extremist groups such as al-Qaeda nor were any planning to strike in the United States.

Officials from both nations say there hasn't been any sign of the southern U.S. border becoming an entry point for terrorists, as had been feared after the suicide jetliner hijackings that struck New York and Washington in 2001.

The Mexican government disclosed the 12 arrests this week in response to a public information request seeking details of any terrorism arrests in the past seven years. The Associated Press made the request in February.

Many Americans feared that Islamic terrorists from al-Qaeda might try to slip into the United States by linking up with the criminal gangs and drug cartels that control large swaths of Mexico and smuggle drugs and migrants across the border.

Asked whether Mexico's 12 terrorism arrests were linked to plots against the United States, an official at the Mexican Attorney General's office said none "had anything to do with that."

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said five were Spaniards linked to the Basque separatist group ETA and seven were Mexicans involved in radical domestic activities in Mexico.

Homeland Security spokesman Russ Knocke said yesterday that the United States is working with Mexico to ensure terrorists don't turn to Mexico. "There's no indication that there's been a direct al-Qaeda presence in Mexico," he said. "But there certainly have been individuals that present security concerns."

Knocke wouldn't elaborate, but one of the U.S. government's recent worries has been smuggling networks moving East African migrants through Latin America and into the U.S. Two such smugglers operating in Mexico and Belize were arrested last year.

In a speech Wednesday on international terrorism threats, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said the biggest threat in Mexico is likely the powerful drug trade, in which gangs target both police and civilians and often behead their enemies.

"These enterprises may currently be criminal enterprises, but we cannot rule out the possibility in the future that they may take on a more political coloration," Chertoff said.

Many people from Muslim countries now have trouble getting visas to visit Mexico, and officials have arrested dozens of Christian Iraqis who fled violence in their homeland and tried to sneak into Southern California through Mexico.

Thomas Sanderson, deputy director of the transnational threats project at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, said al-Qaeda usually sends its members through Europe because, unlike Mexico, citizens of those countries can enter U.S. territory without a visa.

"We are more likely to see people come in through airplanes," he said.

Sanderson doubted that al-Qaeda operatives would expose themselves to organized crime or smuggling groups in Mexico. "They'd be concerned that their cover or their effort would be exposed. It's unfamiliar territory for them," he said.

***** Original *San Diego Union-Tribune* article can be found at military-quotes.com URL as listed below:

<http://www.military-quotes.com/forum/mexico-u-s-find-no-t67202.html>

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Los Angeles Times
September 13, 2008

Nuclear Know-How Made Easy, Report On Libya Shows

A study by the IAEA, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency, says sensitive documents on bombs were available electronically.

By Borzou Daragahi, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

BEIRUT — A leaked report by a U.N. agency reveals fresh details about Libya's now-abandoned attempts to obtain nuclear weapons and an underground network of scientists who peddled atomic secrets for cash.

Before deciding to abandon its quest for nuclear weapons, Libya had tapped into a sophisticated black-market network that included Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, says a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA, prepared for delivery Friday to members of its governing board.

Though Libya was far from obtaining nuclear weapons, a probe into its program showed how easily nuclear secrets could be passed around. Most of the sensitive documents for enriching nuclear material and designing weapons were being put into electronic form, allowing for e-mailing or for transportation on memory sticks, said the report by the IAEA, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency.

The report, prepared for a Sept. 22 meeting of the agency's board of governors, reveals few major surprises about Libya's quest to obtain nuclear weapons. But it fills in some blanks.

"What the IAEA report shows is that illicit nuclear trade has been around for a long time," said David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington think tank that posted a copy of the report on its website. "It shows that the illicit nuclear trade has been key to the progression of many secret nuclear weapons programs."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited Libya this month to meet with the country's longtime leader, Moammar Kadafi. His nation was under heavy U.S. sanctions until it decided in late 2003 to renounce support for militant groups, abandon its nuclear program and come clean on the details of its efforts to obtain weapons of mass destruction.

The IAEA report makes it clear that although Libya had bought tons of uranium and some advanced equipment, it had been unable to start enriching the material.

"The Libyans didn't seem very competent at this," said Jeffrey Lewis, an arms control expert at the New America Foundation, a Washington think tank. "They weren't able to even get the centrifuges that they bought working."

According to the report, Khan offered in 1984 to sell the Libyans high-speed centrifuges to produce enriched uranium, which can be used as fissile material in a nuclear bomb. The Libyans decided that they didn't have the human or financial resources to make the deal.

But Libya called Khan's network back five years later and cut a deal in 1991. The equipment languished in a warehouse in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, because of a U.N. Security Council embargo imposed on Libya the next year. But by 1997, Libya had managed to receive 20 pre-assembled centrifuges and parts for 200 more. In 2002, it began taking delivery of about 10,000 more-advanced centrifuges.

About 3,000 centrifuges refining uranium continuously for one year can produce enough material for one nuclear bomb, experts say. But Libya never even managed to introduce any uranium into the machines, the IAEA has concluded.

Albright said Khan's network was poised to help Libya with on-the-ground expertise when Kadafi finally abandoned the program.

Questions remain about Libya's program. Inspectors analyzing microfiches found designs for building and disassembling nuclear fuel rods and recovering plutonium from spent fuel rods, which is one way of making a nuclear bomb.

Libya has not been able to flesh out details about how or where it obtained the microfiches. Libyan officials could only finger an intermediary who sold them in the 1980s.

The IAEA report also said the agency has not been able to figure out the origins of 4,800 pounds of uranium hexafluoride, a compound used in the production of fissile material for a nuclear bomb, that Libya received in 2001 and 2002.

And the IAEA warned that "much of the sensitive information coming from the network existed in the electronic form," which could make it hard for arms control inspectors to stop nuclear proliferation.

"Once it's electronic, you never feel confident that you've gotten it all back," Albright said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-libya13-2008sep13,0,5402808.story>

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Washington Post
September 13, 2008
Pg. 11

Nuclear Ring Was More Advanced Than Thought, U.N. Says

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

The nuclear smuggling ring headed by Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan possessed a broader range of secret nuclear designs than was previously known and shared them electronically among members of the network, a U.N. watchdog group said yesterday.

A report by the International Atomic Energy Agency also acknowledged large gaps in investigators' understanding of the smuggling ring, raising concerns that Khan's nuclear black market may have had additional customers whose identities remain unknown.

"Much of the sensitive information coming from the network existed in electronic form, enabling easier use and dissemination," the Vienna-based agency stated in an internal report, copies of which were obtained by several news outlets and nonprofit groups. Among the key documents, the report said, were instructions for making enriched uranium, and "more disturbingly, information related to nuclear weapons design." U.S. and U.N. officials have previously confirmed that blueprints for at least two types of nuclear weapons were found on computers owned by Swiss businessmen associated with Khan.

Yesterday's report summarized the IAEA's five-year investigation into Libya's former weapons program, which the country's leader officially renounced in 2003. Libya acknowledged being a longtime customer of Khan's, and it voluntarily turned over evidence, including hundreds of documents, that described the country's business dealings with the Pakistani scientist.

U.S. and IAEA officials say Khan and his partners sold nuclear technology to Libya, North Korea and Iran over nearly 20 years. Libya is believed to have been the biggest customer, having purchased or ordered parts for thousands of centrifuges used to make enriched uranium, as well as bomb designs.

The IAEA report officially gave Libya a clean bill of health, saying that its renunciation of nuclear weapons technology appeared genuine. But it said the process of documenting Libya's nuclear history had turned up troubling new findings about the sophistication of Khan's black-market empire.

The IAEA discovered, for example, that the smuggling ring possessed multiple designs covering nearly every aspect of nuclear weapons development, from uranium processing to "casting and machining and the testing of nuclear weapons components," the agency's report said. Some of the blueprints reflected modern designs that were more advanced than similar drawings Khan is known to have shared with Iran, the report stated.

Because many of the documents were digitized, they could be easily distributed. "A substantial amount of sensitive information related to the fabrication of nuclear weapons was available to members of the network," the report said.

The IAEA said it was unable to determine the origin of some of the nuclear material found in Libya. The acknowledgment underscored concerns, long held among nuclear weapons experts, that parts of the network may continue to operate undetected.

"It is naive to think that somehow these guys aren't still doing business," said Jeffrey Lewis, director of the Nuclear Strategy and Nonproliferation Initiative at the New America Foundation. "These networks lay around like a loaded gun for anyone to use."

Khan apologized for his role in the nuclear smuggling ring in 2004, in a statement broadcast on Pakistani television. He has remained under house arrest since then but has not been charged with crimes or made available to U.S. or U.N. officials for questioning.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/12/AR2008091203226.html>

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FOX News

Report: Kim Jong Il Began Losing Consciousness In April

Sunday, September 14, 2008

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il, who is reportedly recovering from a stroke, began losing consciousness at work in April and could not properly govern as his health worsened, a major daily Japanese newspaper reported Sunday. Citing an unnamed Chinese official with close ties to North Korea, the Mainichi Shimbun said the 66-year-old Kim's unspecified condition impaired his judgment, and his decisions related to international denuclearization talks became less flexible.

Kim had often worked late nights but was forced to curtail his schedule starting May or June, the Mainichi said. In Seoul, Kim Ho-nyeon, a spokesman at South Korea's Unification Ministry, said Sunday that the Mainichi's report could not be confirmed. An official of the National Intelligence Service, South Korea's spy agency, also said his agency could not immediately confirm the Japanese media report. He asked not to be named, citing internal policy.

Japanese foreign ministry officials were unavailable for comment. Kim's health noticeably deteriorated last summer when serious kidney and heart problems began to plague the leader, according to the Japanese newspaper. South Korean media have recently reported that Kim collapsed around Aug. 15. His absence from last week's 60th anniversary celebrations intensified speculation that the leader — long believed to be suffering from diabetes and heart disease — was seriously ill. He had been out of the public eye for weeks and foreign doctors were rumored to have been flown into Pyongyang to treat him.

A separate Japanese report Saturday said Kim underwent heart surgery by a team of German doctors in late April 2007. It was unclear, however, whether his current condition is connected to the surgery, which was performed to widen blocked arteries, the Asahi Shimbun said, citing an unnamed South Korean government official. Concerns have emerged that Kim's health could further complicate the six-party disarmament talks, which recently hit a snag over how to verify North Korea's nuclear programs. The negotiations include North Korea, South Korea, Japan, China, Russia and the United States. South Korea's top nuclear envoy, Kim Sook, told reporters Friday that Seoul officials were discussing the matter with their counterparts in the U.S. and China.

South Korea said recently that North Korea had begun restoring its nuclear facilities, apparently to protest delays by Washington in removing the North from a list of terrorism-sponsoring countries. North Korea stopped disabling its Yongbyon nuclear complex in mid-August. The U.S. has said North Korea must agree to an international plan to verify the account of its nuclear programs it submitted in June if it wants to be removed from the terrorism list.

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,422264,00.html>

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Military, Party In Control While Kim's Ill

Status quo maintained

By Sara A. Carter, The Washington Times

Senior members of the military and the Korean Workers' Party have been ruling North Korea while their leader, Kim Jong-il, is incapacitated, and the nuclear-armed country is not likely to become unstable in the near future, U.S. intelligence officials and Korean specialists say. Three U.S. officials and a former U.S. official who still works with North Korea said that Mr. Kim, 66, had been battling health problems for months before he suffered an apparent stroke last month, leaving day-to-day responsibilities to subordinates.

The leader's sickness should not disrupt the internal politics in a nation accustomed to a poor economy and isolation. "He doesn't have a clear successor, and it's entirely possible that there is some infighting within the North Korean elite," said a U.S. intelligence official, who could not disclose his name because of the nature of his work. The intelligence official added, however, that senior North Korean party members follow the policies that Mr. Kim would have pursued and that although instability is possible, it is not likely "because he's been ill for quite a while and other high-ranking party members are in control."

"Even in the event of his death, there has been a support structure underneath him that has been running the North Korean government," said the U.S. official, who had the same assessment as two other intelligence officials interviewed by The Washington Times. The former U.S. official said Mr. Kim looked in poor health when he met in October with then-South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun and did not accompany Mr. Roh to an annual extravaganza of athletics and propaganda in Pyongyang called the Arirang Games.

Because his illness was publicly disclosed in news reports Tuesday, some analysts have expressed concern that domestic developments in North Korea have caused it to stall over nuclear disarmament. Talks have come to an impasse because of a dispute between North Korea and the United States over how to verify the country's nuclear programs. North Korea has complained that the Bush administration has not removed it from a State Department list of terrorism-sponsoring states despite a U.S. pledge to do so.

A senior Bush administration official told The Times that information regarding the rapid recovery of Mr. Kim is suspect. "We're going to talk with North Korean neighbors in the region to discuss the situation there; no one wants an unstable North Korea," the official stated. "But it's an opaque situation, and we have people analyzing every aspect of it." Jack Pritchard, a former Bush administration negotiator with North Korea who now heads the Korea Economic Institute, said the Bush administration "moved the goal posts" when it demanded that North Korea accept a plan to verify its nuclear activities before removing the country from the blacklist.

The North Koreans are angry, he said, and have stopped dismantling their nuclear program as they had promised to do under an agreement with the United States and the other four members of the so-called six-party talks - China, South Korea, Japan and Russia. "The actions that occurred after his health event are totally consistent with what he would have done," Mr. Pritchard said.

Mike Chinoy, author of "Meltdown: The Inside Story of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis," said that if Mr. Kim "were to die soon, you'd have some collective military-dominated leadership evoking Kim Jong-il and his father" to carry on with their policies.

"I think that the North Korean system, for all its awfulness, is more resilient than others give it credit for," said Mr. Chinoy, who is also a senior fellow with the Pacific Council on International Policy, a nonpartisan think tank in Los Angeles. "As far as Kim's three sons, there is no evidence that any groundwork has been laid publicly that the mantle will be passed to them. You have the military, the Korean Workers' Party and then the family. There very well will be overlap." These "are the three groups to watch as news unfolds," he said.

Mr. Kim's eldest son, Kim Jong-nam, 37, fell out of favor with his father when he used a fake Dominican passport to enter Japan. Mr. Kim's second son, Kim Jong-chul, 27, is reported to have studied in Switzerland and to have been appointed to a high position in the Korean Workers' Party last year. But Kenji Fujimoto, who says he was the

private sushi chef to Mr. Kim for 13 years, claims the "Dear Leader" thinks the second son is too soft and instead favors his youngest son, Kim Jong-un, 24, who apparently looks and acts just like his father.

"If something happened to Kim, there are a lot of real issues here - what to do on the nuclear front, on the economic front," Mr. Chinoy said. "The honest answer is, nobody really knows how any of these conflicting personalities will interact or play against each other." Gordon Flake, executive director of the Mansfield Foundation in Washington, said he had been told that Mr. Kim suffered a stroke last month and was recovering but was not to the point where he could attend Tuesday's ceremony on the 60th anniversary of the founding of North Korea.

Mr. Flake said he was "skeptical of the line that the military is in charge and that's why we're having these problems" over the North Korean nuclear program. "That's too convenient and overanalyzing," he said. He acknowledged, however, that few outsiders have a firm grip over developments in North Korea. "If there's an opaque leadership in the world, it's North Korea's," he said. A former U.S. official dealing with Korea who asked not to be named because he held a sensitive position said he thinks that Mr. Kim is still in charge. "I don't think anyone has made any decisions that go against his instructions," the former U.S. official said.

The former official said he doubted that North Korea would give up its nuclear weapons because they "don't have any reason to trust anyone in the United States or the Russians or the Chinese." "They worked very hard to get these weapons. They are not going to become the first nuclear-weapons state to give them up." The former official said that if Mr. Kim were to die, it was possible that a collective leadership could replace him temporarily but that eventually one man would rise to power.

"My sense is, historically in both North and South Korea, collective leadership doesn't work. Somebody will come up on top." Foreign doctors, possibly from China and France, performed an operation on Mr. Kim after he collapsed on or about Aug. 15, the newspapers Dong-a Ilbo and JoongAng Ilbo reported, citing unidentified government officials.

Mr. Kim's condition has improved, and he is not suffering from slurred speech, a disability often associated with a stroke, the reports said. However, South Korea's largest newspaper, Chosun Ilbo, said the stroke had left Mr. Kim with "partial paralysis." It quoted an unidentified senior government official as saying, "I understand that he is suffering inconvenience on the left part of his body." South Korea's main spy agency did not comment to the Associated Press about reports of Mr. Kim's paralysis, repeating a previous statement that the leader had much improved from an unspecified circulatory problem.

This article is based in part on wire service reports.

<http://www.washtimes.com/news/2008/sep/14/military-party-keep-control-while-kims-ill/>

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Washington Times
September 14, 2008
Pg. 4

Analysis

One-Time Deterrents, Nuclear Weapons Pose a Threat

By Claude Salhani, Middle East Times

As long as superpowers held the monopoly on nuclear technology, the perils associated with nuclear weapons were minimal, despite the Cold War and one or two crises when the nuclear codes were almost activated. But now we are entering a new era of post-nuclear exclusivity, where non-nation entities are seeking to obtain weapons of mass destruction, not for the purpose of deterrence, but rather with specific intent to cause maximum damage and casualties.

Since the Soviet Union acquired the atomic bomb shortly after the United States at the end of World War II, a number of other countries strived to join that exclusive club. The belief was — and partially remains — that possessing a nuclear arsenal is enough of a deterrent. No mad dictator would be adventurous enough to attack another country armed with nuclear weapons.

In other words, nuclear bombs acted as a very effective defensive tool. At least in theory. That was the view adopted by other nuclear countries — China, France and Britain. India and Pakistan, eternal enemies in southwestern Asia, also developed nuclearstrike capabilities. Again, the intent was not to use them against each other, rather to hope they would serve as a deterrence.

The Islamic Republic of Iran realized this fact only too well during the eight-year war with Saddam Hussein's Iraq in the 1980s, but that realization came only after nearly 500,000 Iranian soldiers were killed in conventional fighting. Iraq lost an equal number of soldiers. Other countries followed suit: North Korea spent money and resources that it didn't have to develop nuclear technology, fearful that the United States and South Korea would try to overthrow the reclusive and overparanoid regime in Pyongyang.

Libya admitted to having invested in trying to develop a bomb with North Korean help. But spooked by the U.S. invasion of Iraq and nudged on by Moammar Gadhafi's son, Saif al-Islam, Libya turned over its bomb-making kit to the U.S. in exchange for better relations with Washington. It worked. Libya has stopped trying to blow planes out of the sky, and just this month, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice flew to Tripoli to meet with Col. Gadhafi.

And finally, Israel and South Africa have never officially admitted to being in possession of nuclear bombs, but the fact is hardly a secret to anyone. South Africa voluntarily dismantled its program under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency after apartheid was ended, getting rid of two evils in the same decade. Israel, the only nuclear country in the Middle East, continues to stay silent about its program based in Dimona, in the southern part of the country.

But would any country in possession of nuclear arms today truly be in danger of attack if it were to get rid of its nuclear weapons? This is the question George Perkovich and James M. Acton ask in the latest issue of the Adelphi Paper, published by the London International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Mr. Perkovich is vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and director of its nonproliferation program. Mr. Acton is a physicist by training and lectures at the Department of War Studies at King's College London. The authors point out that, indeed, "none of today's nuclearstates would fall prey to major aggression if they all eliminated their nuclear arsenals."

True, chances of any of the three NATO nuclear countries — the U.S., Britain and France — coming under attack from another state is highly improbable. The same can be said of Russia and China. And if India and Pakistan manage to retain cool heads despite their differences and their border disputes, that part of the world would certainly be safer. As for North Korea, no one is seriously going to attack it.

When it comes to nuclear weapons today, the real danger stems not from the countries possessing them and (the next part of this sentence is bound to raise a storm of protest) not even from "rogue" countries such as Iran and other would-be members of the "axis of evil." Assuming for a moment that Iran were to develop nuclear weapons and assuming that the ayatollahs were mad enough to use them — which they are not — the rulers of Tehran know full well that they would not be around long enough to watch the fireball on their television sets, as Iran would cease to exist. The real concern today lies in efforts by terrorist groups to acquire weapons of mass destruction: chemical, biological and, mostly, nuclear. Brian Michael Jenkins, who has just released a book titled "Will Terrorists Go Nuclear?" writes, "There is no doubt that the idea of nuclear weapons may appeal to terrorists."

Alas, it is that new threat that ultimately will prevent the abolishment of nuclear weapons, at least not until the threat of nuclear terrorism dissipates. And that may be a few years yet. The nuclear genie has been let out of the bottle; the difficult task is how to entice it back in and forever seal it tight.

<http://washingtontimes.com/news/2008/sep/14/one-time-deterrents-nuclear-weapons-pose-a-threat/>

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New York Times
September 14, 2008
Pg. WK3

We May Miss Kim Jong-Il (And Maybe Musharraf)

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON — Last week, when the news filtered out of the black hole of North Korea that Kim Jong-il likely suffered a stroke in August, no one in the Bush administration rushed out to buy a get-well-soon card. This is, after all, a man President Bush has described as a “tyrant,” a dictator who starves his own people, and, according to some Senators, a “pygmy” — the biggest insult for a guy who keeps a lot of elevator shoes in the presidential closet in Pyongyang.

But whatever names he is called, there was a surprising ambivalence in official Washington about the news — more than a whiff of reluctance, in fact, to lose Mr. Kim at the helm just now. This was true especially among intelligence officials, who wake up every day worried about what happens when states implode, and whether there will be a free-for-all for their weapons.

Such shudders have not been limited to the Hermit Kingdom this summer. They were also felt about Pakistan even before its president, Pervez Musharraf, resigned in mid-August rather than face impeachment. Knowing Mr. Musharraf was on thin ice, the United States government had already run “tabletop exercises” in which a Pakistani descent into chaos would leave everyone wondering who was in control of that country’s nuclear arsenal. Would it be the new elected prime minister, whom the military deeply distrusts? The army? The small clique of trusted Musharraf aides who built the country’s nuclear security system, but no longer have a patron?

In fact, the worries about these two unsteady nuclear powers have begun to change thinking among officials in Washington who used to focus principally on the awful scenario that a nuclear weapon might pass straight from a government to a terrorist group. Now, seven years after the post-9/11 panic, when a C.I.A. agent known as Dragonfire erroneously reported that Al Qaeda had hidden a nuclear weapon in New York, the worry is being broadened — to a new focus on whose hands control the nukes within a government, especially at a time of great confusion.

It is not that anyone is more sanguine about the possibility of a terror group acquiring enough nuclear material to set off an atomic bomb in an American city. That is still the No. 1 worry. But the way the problem is analyzed is beginning to shift.

“You know,” one senior intelligence official who would not speak on the record because he monitors the Pakistani arsenal said, “we used to have this great distinction between ‘states with nukes’ that we could deter the old-fashioned way, and ‘groups with nukes’ that we couldn’t deter.” But today, he said, “our biggest problem may be groups within states” that could take advantage of political chaos to seize what they need, either to sell it or to win a struggle for leadership of the country.

Oh, for the simple days of President Bush’s formulation of “with us or against us.” Before he came up with alternative rationales for the Iraq war, President Bush often said that the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks had changed his view of tolerable risk, and he insisted that the possibility, no matter how slim, that Saddam Hussein would obtain or sell a weapon was unacceptable. Yet to experts in his own administration, what’s happening today in countries like North Korea and Pakistan poses a far higher statistical risk of letting loose nukes out the door than Iraq ever did. (For one thing, there is no question that they have the nuclear material.)

The president himself has been silent about this problem, but his spokesmen and the Pentagon’s have a stock answer to questions about it. It boils down to this: There is little reason to worry as long as the military remains in charge. Their reason: While North Korea and Pakistan have little else in common, they both have strong militaries with a well-honed sensibility about survival.

“It is very difficult for me to imagine someone arriving at a North Korean facility with guns blazing and emerging with a nuclear weapon,” said Matthew Bunn, who teaches at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and is the author of an annual survey titled “Securing the Bomb.” “And the military understands that there is a big chance of retaliation if they ever sold anything to a terrorist — retaliation that would remove them and everyone they ever met from power.”

That is why the American bomb-watching community has a grudging fondness for Mr. Kim, the “pygmy dictator.” The Americans’ biggest fear about North Korea is a collapse of the state, in which a starving, broke nation simply implodes. That could send everyone on a mad scramble for the country’s arsenal — the Chinese, the South Koreans, the Russians, the Americans. “The bad news about North Korea,” said Jonathan Pollack, a North Korea expert at the Naval War College, “is that we don’t know much about their nuclear control system. Or even if they have much of one.”

The good news is that the arsenal is small. In recent negotiations with the United States, before Mr. Kim fell ill, the country said it possessed about 82 pounds of bomb-grade plutonium. If they are not lying (a significant “if”) that’s about enough to make six weapons. Some in the C.I.A. think the North Koreans could have 12 or more weapons. It’s nothing to sneeze at, but compared to Pakistan’s arsenal, it’s a manageable number.

Pakistan has a sophisticated Nuclear Command Authority, with layers upon layers of protections, some of them installed with the help of a covert American program that has already spent more than \$100 million. Its leaders are acolytes of Mr. Musharraf, but they are thought to be military professionals first, and therefore responsible.

But unified leadership at the top still counts. The problem is that Pakistan has a great deal of nuclear material, and is making more at a quick pace. Its facilities are spread out, so that India could not easily attack them all. The intelligence service, the I.S.I., has deeply divided sympathies, with many supporting the Taliban and extremist causes. And the bulk of the military isn’t much better.

“So when a Pakistani facility gets attacked,” asks Mr. Bunn, “what do the guards do? Do they fight? Do they help? Do they run away?” Recent history is not especially reassuring about either Pakistan or North Korea, considering how much technology has already leaked from them to other states. Pakistan’s laboratories were where Abdul Qadeer Khan started his nuclear proliferation ring and flourished during political upheaval in the 1990s. Dr. Khan has been under house arrest, but in recent months he has been allowed to move around much more freely.

And when the Israelis bombed a nuclear reactor in Syria a year ago, it soon came out that they had a lot of design and building help — from the North Koreans. That was when Mr. Kim had his full faculties. The nightmare is how much worse the leakage could get if it is unclear who is in charge.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/14/weekinreview/14sanger.html?ref=weekinreview>

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Chicago Tribune
September 14, 2008

Air Force Plans To Pull Out Big (Uh, Little) Guns

Scientists designing 'lethal' mini-drones

By Aamer Madhani, Chicago Tribune correspondent

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — It may look like a futuristic arcade game, but it's a scene from an official Air Force animated video: Bad guys of indiscernible origin being shadowed, from a careful distance, by small robotic drones designed to resemble birds and insects.

When one of the bad guys opens his apartment door, a tiny robo-bug, looking like a garage door opener with wings, sneaks in to spy. In another scene, a bug—the Air Force calls them Micro Air Vehicles, or MAVs—creeps into a sniper's roost and delivers a deadly shot to the back of his head.

It might sound far-fetched. But top Air Force officials believe that MAVs could be a significant part of the Defense Department's arsenal in the not-so-distant future. Civilian researchers and airmen at the Air Force Research Laboratory, based at this installation just outside Dayton, have set a 2015 deadline to roll out the first generation of MAVs. This first group, they hope, will be the size of birds and able to operate several days without recharging.

"These are one of the assets that in the future could be a game-changer," said Mark Lewis, chief scientist of the U.S. Air Force. For more than a decade, the Pentagon and the aerospace industry have poured tens of millions of dollars into research surrounding tiny flying machines that officials say could be an invaluable help in battle and rescue operations.

Scientists have studied the flight of fruit flies, the crawling of insects and the perching of birds as they look for ideas on how to build an aircraft that is light enough to be carried in a soldier's rucksack but durable enough to stay aloft for long periods. U.S. forces and their allies have already used some small vehicles in the field, but nothing that compares in size and stealth to what scientists at the Air Force lab are looking to develop in coming years.

Britain's Special Forces have tested a 28-inch-long MAV, called the Wasp, on reconnaissance missions in Afghanistan. Last year, the U.S. Marines placed a \$19.3 million order for the small unmanned aircraft, developed by California-based AeroVironment. The Wasp can be fitted with explosives that could theoretically be used for a surprise attack.

Bigger's not better

The U.S. military relies on large unmanned aerial vehicles for reconnaissance missions and surgical strikes in Iraq and Afghanistan. But Air Force officials say the smaller MAVs, flying at 50 to 100 feet, would offer troops on the ground precise information that a larger drone flying at 30,000 feet cannot.

"The idea of developing very small unmanned flying vehicles has been an obsession of the Air Force for decades," said Loren Thompson, a defense analyst at the Lexington Institute, a Washington-based think tank. "It follows the general trend toward miniaturization of almost everything the Air Force does."

The near-term goal is to create a bird-size MAV by 2015, and by 2030 the Air Force hopes to deploy a bug-size aircraft, said Maj. Gregory Parker, a team leader in the laboratory's Air Vehicles Directorate. The marketing video, created by the Air Force scientists to explain their vision, claims the drones will be "unobtrusive, pervasive, lethal."

But the Air Force and its defense industry partners face a steep climb in the development of the next generation of MAVs. The Wasp established a record for MAVs in 2002 when it stayed up for 107 minutes in a test flight—far short of the Air Force Research Laboratory's goal of developing a vehicle that can operate for days or even weeks at a time.

Parker said the directorate is searching for ways that their conceptual MAVs could harvest energy from potential resources in an urban environment, such as power lines and sunlight. Another problem is landing. "The biggest challenge is how do we make it able to maneuver on spot, so it can land without a runway," Parker said. "We have to figure out how do you land on a tree limb or building's edge. How do you land on a power line?"

Air Force officials say drones as small as the ones they envision could blend into the environment, peering around the blind turn of a mountain pass or peeking into a suspected insurgent hideout to gather intelligence more safely and with greater stealth, officials say.

Researchers are also working on technology that would allow Air Force officials to launch a swarm of MAVs to provide more detailed surveillance. "Maybe you launch a thousand of them on one city block to find one [target]," Parker said. Parker added that the use of tiny MAVs could have civilian applications. For example, small unmanned air vehicles could be dispatched into rubble after a natural disaster to search for signs of life.

Some skepticism

Thompson, the defense analyst, said bird- and bug-size drones would be useful in the type of fighting troops have faced in Afghanistan and Iraq. But he remains skeptical that the researchers will be able to develop aircraft in the near future that can sustain missions that last weeks.

He also said significant advances would be necessary to create micro-air vehicles that could carry the weight of a small camera or a weapons system. "There may be the know-how to create a vehicle the size of a grasshopper," Thompson said. "But if it can't carry the payload, why build a grasshopper?" Douglas Blake, deputy director of the Air Vehicles Directorate, acknowledged that researchers face hurdles, but said his team has the brainpower to overcome them. And the payoff in the battlefield, he added, would be huge. "This would give us the capability of going anywhere at any time," Blake said.

http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-robo-bug_bdsep14.0.7757745.story

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London Sunday Telegraph
September 14, 2008

China's Military Ambition Fuels Asian Arms Race

By Richard Spencer, in Beijing

China's growing military ambition, matched only by its growing military spending, is fuelling a rapid Asian arms race. Beijing deploys the world's biggest army, its defence spending is rising faster than any other power and, to cap it all, its forces will this month carry out their first spacewalk.

With India, Japan and Russia also investing heavily in defence, a new Asian arms race is under way. According to official figures, Beijing's military budget this year is 418 billion yuan - £35 billion - a rise of 17.8 per cent on 2007. This already exceeds Britain's defence budget of £34 billion and places China's military spending second only to the US.

According to figures from Jane's, the military specialists, it has risen by 178 per cent in the past seven years, even after adjusting for inflation. At this rate, China will spend £180 billion - half of the Pentagon's current budget and five times Britain's - by 2020. But the greatest change is not in how much China is spending, but where the investment is going. Under Chairman Mao, China regarded the army as a massed revolutionary block whose sheer scale would simply absorb any threat, foreign or domestic.

Only since the first Gulf War in 1991 has China started focusing on the new generation of military hardware it may face in the event of war. Beijing's military planners know they cannot rely on China's size alone as a deterrent.

The result has been a three-pronged strategy. China is upgrading technology while downsizing the army. The first prong is to increase the number of short- and medium-range missiles it has aimed at Taiwan, the future of which is China's number one military priority.

The second is to build a navy capable of projecting power into the Pacific and beyond, both to deter US intervention on Taiwan's side and to guard vital shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean. But this will not be a classic "blue water" navy with a global reach - China still has no aircraft carriers.

The third prong is the outermost line of defence: a space and anti-satellite programme that may one day be strong enough to threaten US weapons and guidance systems. This is asymmetric warfare at its most dramatic.

China's submarine building programme is at last starting to show success after years in which it relied on Russian imports. Beijing is presently building two submarines capable of launching nuclear missiles and another boat designed for attack missions. Once these reach completion, China's navy will have five ballistic missile submarines - compared with Britain's four - and seven other nuclear submarines. Projecting power across thousands of miles of ocean is the only purpose for a fleet of this kind.

This helps explain why India is building a nuclear submarine of its own and leasing another from Russia. India's navy presently enjoys a slender advantage over China in that it possesses one aircraft carrier and is acquiring another two. In practice, however, China's superior submarine fleet probably negates this gain.

In the past, China's alliance with Pakistan worried India most. There are historical tensions too - China and India fought a bloody border war in 1962 over disputed territory in the Himalayas. But of greatest importance is a long-term rivalry for pre-eminence in Asia between the world's most populous nation and its biggest democracy.

On the other hand, some observers say both countries are too busy with other threats to be too concerned with each other. A study by *Jane's Industrial Quarterly* concluded that that helping their industrial base was a major reason for the military build-up by both India and China. Their shared aim is to replace Russian military imports and boost their own exports, while gaining knock-on benefits for civilian industry.

To the extent there is an armed race between the two powers, it may be a means of giving weight to their rising international status. "There is a feeling that China needs to have a modern military to be able to have a seat at the top table internationally," said Matthew Smith, a Jane's military economist. "Both India and China require a huge amount of military modernisation just to bring them up to present-day standards. They are building from a very low base."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/2827473/Chinas-military-ambition-fuels-Asian-arms-race.html>

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Miami Herald
September 14, 2008

Nuclear Proliferation Endangers World Stability

By Bob Graham and Jim Talent

During the first presidential debate in 2004, President Bush and Sen. John Kerry agreed -- as stated by the president -- that "the single, largest threat to American national security today is nuclear weapons in the hands of a terrorist network." Yet despite that consensus, the subject of weapons of mass destruction proliferation has quickly disappeared from the national agenda.

Few comments or questions on this issue have been posed to the presidential candidates, even though preventing WMD proliferation should be on the short list of priorities for a McCain or Obama White House. And it rarely appears on polls of the most urgent concerns of citizens. So, in 2008, after seven years in which there have been no successful terrorist attacks inside the country, why not relax? Here are the reasons:

*Terrorists have continued to demonstrate the intent to acquire a WMD capability. As Director of National Intelligence Admiral Michael McConnell said in his Sept. 10, 2007, testimony to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, "al Qaeda will continue to try to acquire and employ chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear material in attacks and would not hesitate to use them if it develops what it deems is sufficient capability."

*The potential human toll of an attack utilizing weapons of mass destruction is appalling. On a normal workday, half a million people crowd the area within a half-mile radius of Times Square. A noon detonation of a nuclear device in Midtown Manhattan would kill them all.

*Another attack -- particularly with WMD -- would have a devastating impact on the American and the world economies. As former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan warned, a nuclear terrorist attack would push "tens of millions of people into dire poverty," creating "a second death toll throughout the developing world."

*The environment for the use of nuclear and biological weapons has changed. Although Russia is doing a better job of securing its stockpiles and therefore is less of a threat, North Korea and Iran have taken its place. North Korea has gone from two bombs worth of plutonium to an estimated ten. Iran has gone from zero centrifuges spinning to more than 3,000.

*In what some have termed a "nuclear renaissance," many nations are now seeking commercial nuclear power capacity that will add to the inventory of nations and scientists who could extend their interest to nuclear weapons.

*With the nuclear surprises we've experienced in Iran, Syria and North Korea, it is clear that current nonproliferation regimes and mechanisms can no longer be certain to prevent more nuclear proliferation or the theft of bomb-usable materials.

*Biologists are creating synthetic DNA chains of diseases which have been considered extinct, such as the 1918 influenza virus that killed over 40 million people. The potential of using these laboratory-developed strains against an unaware and noninoculated population is ominous.

*There is the necessity of engaging the American people. Unlike the Cold War, which was a superpower vs. superpower confrontation, the current asymmetric threat that would be dramatically escalated if the terrorists had access to nuclear or biological weapons. The incorrect claims regarding Saddam Hussein's WMD and his collusion with al Qaeda have contributed to public skepticism. Nonetheless, there was and is a real danger that al Qaeda will get a nuclear bomb and attack an American city.

Faced with the possibility of a mushroom cloud over Manhattan, many people are paralyzed by a combination of denial and fatalism. The president is the best position to rally the resilience and patriotism of Americans to this threat.

We have been asked by Congress to lead a bipartisan commission to assess the current state of our nation's policies to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction into the hands of rogue states and nonstate terrorists. Our final report will be released in November. Based on our assessment, we will make recommendations to the new Congress and the new president.

We trust that the president and Congress will recognize the primacy of this threat and the consequences should it come to pass. Nuclear terrorism has been described as the ultimate avoidable catastrophe. Whether it -- and other WMD catastrophes -- will be avoided will depend in large part on where it ranks among the 44th president's priorities.

Bob Graham, a former U.S. senator from Florida, is chairman of the congressionally established Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism and the board of oversight of the Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida and the University of Miami. Jim Talent, a former U.S. senator from Missouri, is vice chairman of the WMD Commission and Distinguished Fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/other-views/story/684281.html>

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FOX News

IAEA: Iran Still Failing to Cooperate in Nuke Investigation

Monday , September 15, 2008

The International Atomic Energy Agency said Monday that Iran is still failing to cooperate in their probe of an alleged nuclear arms program.

"We've arrived at a gridlock," said a senior U.N. official of the lack of progress. He demanded anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the restricted report, made available to The Associated Press.

The report also said that -- through uranium enrichment -- Tehran now has amassed a third of the amount of enriched uranium it could reprocess into the material serving as the fissile core of a nuclear weapon, should it choose to do so.

The U.S. and its allies say Iran wants to develop its enrichment program for its weapons applications. But Tehran insists it seeks the technology only to create nuclear fuel, and IAEA oversight and inspections of the Islamic Republic's known enrichment program has not come up with any indications that contradict what Tehran says.

The six-page report confirmed that Iran continues to expand its uranium enrichment program in defiance of three sets of U.N. Security Council sanctions imposed in attempts to force Tehran to mothball such activities.

The document said Iran was now either fully or partially operating 6,000 centrifuges at its cavernous underground facility at Natanz. Beyond those machines, which spin uranium gas into enriched uranium, it was testing 12 more advanced prototypes at its aboveground experimental site at Natanz, a city about 500 kilometers (300 miles) south of Tehran.

To date, Iran had enriched 480 kilograms -- about 1,000 pounds -- of low enriched uranium suitable for nuclear fuel, the report said. Asked to put that figure into context, U.N. officials said Tehran would need three times that amount to begin the process of enriching to the level needed to produce a nuclear weapon.

Running smoothly, 3,000 centrifuges could produce enough nuclear material for a bomb within 18 months, were they configured for that function.

Iran's refusal to end enrichment has been the main trigger for the Security Council sanctions and continues to be the overriding concern for Washington and others accusing Tehran of wanting to make a bomb.

But with Tehran repeatedly saying it was not planning to stop its enrichment program -- and even giving progress reports on its expansion -- the conclusions on enrichment revealed little new. That left the IAEA's acknowledgment - that it had been stonewalled in months of efforts to shed more light on the allegations of past secret Iranian experiments geared toward developing nuclear arms -- the most striking part of the report.

Since its last report in May, "the agency ... has not been able to make any substantive progress," the document said. It called the impasse a matter of "serious concern."

If Iran continues to block investigators, the IAEA "will not be able to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran," the report said.

Anticipating U.S. condemnation, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hasan Qashqavi said in Tehran before the report's release that his country expected the IAEA not to bow to U.S. "pressures."

Iran confirmed the IAEA report, which details a lack of progress on the nuclear front, but vowed to cooperate with the U.N. watchdog's investigation, Reuters reported.

The White House scolded Iran's stonewalling of investigators, and called on Tehran to stop enriching uranium and other reprocessing activities or face the possibility of further sanctions.

"This report shows once again that Iran is refusing to cooperate with the international community," White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said. "The Iranian regime's continued defiance only further isolates the Iranian people. We urge Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities or face further implementation of the existing United Nations Security Council sanctions and the possibility of new sanctions."

Anticipating U.S. condemnation, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hasan Qashqavi said in Tehran before the report's release that his country expected the IAEA not to bow to U.S. "pressures."

Intelligence received by the IAEA in its investigations, as well as from the U.S. and other agency board member nations, suggest Iran experimented with an undeclared uranium enrichment program that was linked to a missile project and drew up blueprints on refitting missiles to allow them to carry nuclear warheads.

The intelligence also suggested Iran was researching construction of an underground site that apparently could be used to test fire nuclear bombs and ordered "dual use" equipment from abroad that could be part of an atomic weapons program.

Additionally, Iran possesses diagrams showing how to mold uranium metal into the shape of warheads.

U.S. intelligence estimates that Iran conducted such experiments until 2003. Iran rejects such allegations and says documents backing them up are fabricated.

The Associated Press contributed to this report

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,422483,00.html>.

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The Hindu
September 14, 2008

IAEA Reveals Khan Network's Reach

The black market network supplying illicit nuclear technology had substantial and sensitive information on how to make atomic arms, the IAEA has revealed. It said much of the network's material was passed on to customers in electronic form — giving a potentially unlimited number of clients access, whether they were governments or individuals. The IAEA's information was contained in a report on Libya and based on investigations conducted since Libya renounced its efforts to make nuclear weapons in 2003.

The report is posted on the agency's internal website for perusal by the IAEA's 35-nation board. While Libya is no longer a proliferation concern, the report's revelations on the network headed by Pakistani scientist A. Q. Khan are important because he also supplied Iran and North Korea with nuclear know-how and hardware and could, therefore, help in investigations of those countries' programmes.

Diplomats linked to the IAEA said the Libya investigation also revealed that the network had peddled more sophisticated information linked to making nuclear weapons than the agency had previously known.

North Korea went on to develop nuclear weapons but agreed to mothball its programme last year before the disarmament process hit a recent snag over a dispute about verification of its atomic activities.

Pakistan has downplayed the IAEA report about Mr. Khan's links with Libya's clandestine nuclear programme, terming it as "recycling of old allegations."

Insisting that there was no new revelation in the report, Pakistan said the report essentially provided an overview of Libya's nuclear programme. "The references to provision of nuclear equipment and related design simply mention

the transfers that took place in the past and the conclusions drawn by the IAEA as a result of its follow-up verification activities,” said Foreign Office Spokesman Muhammad Sadiq in a statement. Presenting this report as a fresh piece of information is an attempt to cast aspersions on Pakistan, said Mr. Sadiq, adding the country has already extended cooperation to the nuclear watchdog in this case. The confidential report by the IAEA said Libya was in contact with the Mr. Khan’s black market network much earlier than first thought. According to the report, Libya’s contacts with Mr. Khan date back to 1984, 10 years earlier than previously assumed. Mr. Khan, was placed under house arrest in 2004 after he confessed of his involvement in the non-proliferation networks. Earlier this year, he retracted his confession, saying it was made under pressure. The IAEA specifically warned about the ease with which weapons designs were transferred through CD-ROMs, computer hard drives and the Internet. The Khan network was active in Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, South Africa, UAE, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Japan according to the report. Available at: <http://www.hindu.com/2008/09/14/stories/2008091455441200.htm>

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Homeland Security Today
Monday, 15 September 2008

US Military Helps Ike Victims

by Mickey McCarter

US Northern Command has sent aircraft, boats, supplies to Texas

The US military provided assistance to victims of Hurricane Ike in Texas through the unique capabilities of its aircraft and water vessels to deliver supplies, evacuate patients from medical facilities, and to conduct search and rescue missions in the past several days.

US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) reported that it activated units to fly or ship supplies and people into or out of the hurricane-damaged areas near Houston. As of Sunday, the military had conducted 27 search and rescue missions and sent the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau from Norfolk, Va., to Galveston, Texas, to provide continued assistance.

USNORTHCOM had deployed large and small boats and aircraft to assist in search and rescue operations in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). USNORTHCOM, based out of Colorado Springs, Colo., called upon the 331st Air Expeditionary Group at Randolph Air Force Base in Texas to assist with 42 prepositioned search and rescue aircraft. The initial sea support effort in response to FEMA requests consisted of 88 high water vessels and 21 small boats. USNORTHCOM also coordinated 93 helicopters and four C-130s to support search and rescue efforts.

The command also kept open lines of communication between US military and civilian forces to keep response efforts coordinated. It began direct communication with FEMA Regions X and VI through defense coordinating officers located in Austin. The military also designated Lackland and Randolph Air Force Bases as headquarters in Texas for logistical operations in support of Hurricane Ike.

The US Department of Defense is using Fort Sam Houston and Randolph Air Force Base as staging areas for supplies and equipment that would go to hurricane-stricken areas. Chinook helicopters also delivered food, water and supplies to victims of Hurricane Ike from Fort Hood over the weekend.

<http://hstoday.us/content/view/5169/128/>

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