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Wall Street Journal  
September 22, 2008  
Pg. 23

### **Everyone Needs To Worry About Iran**

By Richard Holbrooke, R. James Woolsey, Dennis B. Ross and Mark D. Wallace

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visits the United Nations in New York this week. Don't expect an honest update from him on his country's nuclear program. Iran is now edging closer to being armed with nuclear weapons, and it continues to develop a ballistic-missile capability.

Such developments may be overshadowed by our presidential election, but the challenge Iran poses is very real and not a partisan matter. We may have different political allegiances and worldviews, yet we share a common concern -- Iran's drive to be a nuclear state. We believe that Iran's desire for nuclear weapons is one of the most urgent issues facing America today, because even the most conservative estimates tell us that they could have nuclear weapons soon.

A nuclear-armed Iran would likely destabilize an already dangerous region that includes Israel, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, and pose a direct threat to America's national security. For this reason, Iran's nuclear ambitions demand a response that will compel Iran's leaders to change their behavior and come to understand that they have more to lose than to gain by going nuclear.

Tehran claims that it is enriching uranium only for peaceful energy uses. These claims exceed the boundaries of credibility and science. Iran's enrichment program is far larger than reasonably necessary for an energy program. In past inspections of Iranian nuclear sites, U.N. inspectors found rare elements that only have utility in nuclear weapons and not in a peaceful nuclear energy program. Iran's persistent rejection of offers from outside energy suppliers or private bidders to supply it with nuclear fuel suggests it has a motive other than energy in developing its nuclear program. Tehran's continual refusal to answer questions from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) about this troublesome part of its nuclear program suggests that it has something to hide.

The world rightfully doubts Tehran's assertion that it needs nuclear energy and is enriching nuclear materials for strictly peaceful purposes. Iran has vast supplies of inexpensive oil and natural gas, and its construction of nuclear reactors and attempts to perfect the nuclear fuel cycle are exceedingly costly. There is no legitimate economic reason for Iran to pursue nuclear energy.

Iran is a deadly and irresponsible world actor, employing terrorist organizations including Hezbollah and Hamas to undermine existing regimes and to foment conflict. Emboldened by the bomb, Iran will become more inclined to sponsor terror, threaten our allies, and support the most deadly elements of the Iraqi insurgency.

Tehran's development of a nuclear bomb could serve as the "starter's gun" in a new and potentially deadly arms race in the most volatile region of the world. Many believe that Iran's neighbors would feel forced to pursue the bomb if it goes nuclear.

By continuing to act in open defiance of its treaty obligations under the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Iran rejects the inspections mandated by the IAEA and flouts multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions and sanctions.

At the same time, Iranian leaders declare that Israel is illegitimate and should not exist. President Ahmadinejad specifically calls for Israel to be "wiped off from the map," while seeking the weapons to do so. Such behavior casts Iran as an international outlier. No one can reasonably suggest that a nuclear-armed Iran will suddenly honor international treaty obligations, acknowledge Israel's right to exist, or cease efforts to undermine the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Mr. Ahmadinejad is also the chief spokesman for a regime that represses religious and ethnic minorities, women, students, labor groups and homosexuals. A government willing to persecute its own people can only be viewed as even more dangerous if armed with nuclear weapons.

Finally, our economy has suffered under the burden of rising oil prices. Iran is strategically located on a key choke point in the world's energy supply chain -- the Strait of Hormuz. No one can suggest that a nuclear Iran would hesitate to use its enhanced leverage to affect oil prices, or would work to ease the burden on the battered economies of the world's oil importers.

Facing such a threat, Americans must put aside their political differences and send a clear and united message that a nuclear armed Iran is unacceptable.

That is why the four of us, along with other policy advocates from across the political spectrum, have formed the nonpartisan group United Against Nuclear Iran. Everyone must understand the danger of a nuclear-armed Iran and mobilize the power of a united American public in opposition. As part of the United Against Nuclear Iran effort, we will announce various programs in the months ahead that we hope will be rallying points for the American and international public to voice unified opposition to a nuclear Iran.

We do not aim to beat the drums of war. On the contrary, we hope to lay the groundwork for effective U.S. policies in coordination with our allies, the U.N. and others by a strong showing of unified support from the American people to alter the Iranian regime's current course. The American people must have a voice in this great foreign-policy challenge, and we can make a real difference through national and international, social, economic, political and diplomatic measures.

*Mr. Holbrooke is a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Mr. Woolsey is a former director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Mr. Ross was a special Middle East coordinator for President Clinton. Mr. Wallace was a representative of the U.S. to the U.N. for management and reform.*

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122204266977561331.html>

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Newsweek

September 29, 2008

**Periscope**

**Iran Nukes: Out Of Reach**

By Dan Ephron

It wasn't an official military assessment, but retired Gen. John Abizaid's remarks at a Marine Corps University conference last week appeared to echo the thinking of at least some in the upper echelons of the U.S. military: Israel is incapable of seriously damaging Iran's nuclear

program. Abizaid, who oversaw military operations in the Middle East as head of U.S. Central Command until 18 months ago, caused a stir last year by publicly asserting the United States could live with a nuclear-armed Iran through a strategy of cold-war-style deterrence. Last week, when asked to reflect on the possible consequences of an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, Abizaid said he doubted whether "the Israelis have the capability to make a lasting impression on the Iranian nuclear program with their military capabilities." An Israel–Iran confrontation, he said, would be "bad for the region, bad for the United States [and would] ultimately move the region into an even more unstable situation."

Israel believes Tehran might be within a year of crossing the uranium-enrichment threshold and has made clear it would not tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran. (Iran says its program is peaceful.) A year ago, Israel sent warplanes to Syria to destroy what it believed to be a budding nuclear facility. But according to several officers and Pentagon analysts who spoke to NEWSWEEK, the U.S. military thinks Israel would face huge challenges in reaching Iran, refueling its warplanes along the way and penetrating hardened nuclear targets. Earlier this month, the United States agreed to sell Israel 1,000 small-diameter bombs known as GBU-39s, capable of piercing several feet of concrete—an arms deal that analysts believe is linked to the Iran issue. But a spokesman for Boeing, which makes the bombs, estimated that they would not be delivered before 2010. And thus far, according to a source familiar with talks between the two countries, the United States has not granted Israel's request for additional equipment. That order from the Israelis, said one Pentagon analyst who monitors the Middle East and did not want to be named discussing sensitive issues, reinforces the notion that its military does not have the means to conduct a large-scale attack.

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/160089>

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Financial Times (FT.com)

September 22 2008

### **Welcome To The Nuclear Club, India**

By Gideon Rachman

Sitting in the front room of his suburban house in Delhi, Shri K. Subrahmanyam, the doyen of Indian strategic thinkers, sips some tea, coughs a little – and remembers the moment he decided that India must develop nuclear weapons. “It was on a visit to America in 1968,” he recalls. “I saw all the top strategic thinkers. Kissinger, who was still at Harvard at the time, Schelling; it was after that, that I decided we must have the bomb. As a matter of national survival.”

Some 40 years later, India is on the brink of becoming an accepted member of the nuclear-weapons club. Later this week Manmohan Singh, India’s courtly and academic prime minister, will meet President George W. Bush at the White House. This unlikely couple will shake hands and congratulate each other that the US-India nuclear deal has passed the Indian parliament and been accepted by the international Nuclear Suppliers Group. Eventual approval by the US Congress seems all but inevitable.

Under the deal, the US will drop its efforts to punish India for developing nuclear weapons – which were introduced after the country staged a nuclear test in 1974. India will now be able to

buy nuclear material for civil use and – its critics fear – for the manufacture of more nuclear bombs.

This development has been greeted with horror by many experts on nuclear non-proliferation. Respectable opinion in the form of The New York Times, the FT and The Economist has condemned the deal. Jimmy Carter, the former US president, has said that it “puts the world at risk”. But, in fact, it is the right decision.

The US-India nuclear deal is simply a recognition of reality. First, that India has nuclear weapons and is not going to give them up. Second, that India is going to be one of the great powers of the 21st century – and that it makes sense for the US and the west as a whole to move beyond a futile effort to sanction the country into renouncing the bomb.

It is, of course, unfortunate that nuclear weapons and great-power status should be so closely associated – but there is undoubtedly a link. The five countries that are allowed to possess nuclear weapons under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty also happen to be the five permanent veto-wielding members of the UN Security Council – the US, Britain, China, France and Russia. All other signatories to the NPT are allowed only civil nuclear power. India has long refused to sign the treaty, in protest at this “nuclear apartheid”. Like Pakistan and Israel, it chose to develop nuclear weapons outside the framework of the NPT.

It would certainly have been preferable if India’s status as one of the world’s great powers had been recognised with permanent membership of the security council. Jaswant Singh, India’s foreign minister at the time of India’s 1998 nuclear tests, recalls with a laugh that Madeleine Albright, then the US secretary of state, asked him if India was “trying to blast its way into the P5? I said, ‘No, but we have surely woken you up’.” Indeed, one of the baffling and slightly alarming aspects of India’s development of nuclear weapons, is that its motives are not entirely clear. Is the main country to be deterred, Pakistan or China? Are India’s goals strategic or symbolic? Does India want the controls on nuclear trade lifted for commercial or military reasons?

America’s goals are similarly unclear. Was Mr Bush mainly motivated by a desire to build a strategic relationship with another of the world’s great democratic nations? Is this part of a US strategy to counter-balance the rise of China? What part has industrial lobbying played in the decision? Even if you ascribe the most benign combination of motives to both parties, there are still plenty of critics who will argue that the deal is dangerous and hypocritical.

It is dangerous because it blows a hole in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, just as the world is struggling to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. And it is hypocritical for the US to insist on the strictest enforcement of the NPT when it comes to Iran, but to cut India a sweetheart deal.

The problem with the danger argument is that the NPT has hardly been an infallible barrier to nuclear proliferation. China, which has signed the treaty, has spread the technology to Pakistan. India, which has not signed the NPT, has not proliferated – and nor has Israel, another non-signatory.

Meanwhile, loopholes in the treaty allow countries such as Iran and North Korea to get right up to the edge of nuclear weapons – and then to withdraw from the treaty, if they so choose, and develop weapons legally.

As for hypocrisy – well, there is a lot of it about. But, in fact, the Indian and Iranian cases are legally different. India never signed the NPT. Iran did – and so it is obliged not to have a nuclear-weapons programme.

In any case, this is a question of political reality – as well as of law. India already has nuclear weapons and nothing short of a global disarmament treaty is likely to change that fact. Iran does not yet have the bomb, and it is important to try to prevent it from reaching that point. All the more so, since the nature of the Iranian and Indian governments is clearly very different. India is a status quo power and a settled and secular democracy; Iran is none of the above. Mr Bush may be disappointed if he thinks that, after his nuclear favour to Mr Singh, India will be reliably pro-American from now onwards. But the US president is still doing the right thing.

[http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3643cb9e-88b9-11dd-a179-0000779fd18c.html?nclick\\_check=1](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3643cb9e-88b9-11dd-a179-0000779fd18c.html?nclick_check=1)

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Aljazeera.net

### **N Korea Removes Atomic Site Seals**

Monday, 22 September 2008

North Korea says it has removed seals from its atomic facility as part of its plan to re-start its nuclear operation, according to media reports. A government spokesman said that work to restore and reactivate operations at Yongbyon were under way, the Kyodo News Agency reported.

"Seals have been taken off," a senior diplomat close to the IAEA said on Monday. Earlier, the International Atomic Agency (IAEA) said that Pyongyang had asked to remove the seals and surveillance cameras that had been put in place to prevent the site being used.

"This morning [North Korea] asked the agency's inspectors to remove seals and surveillance equipment to enable them to carry out tests at the reprocessing plant, which they say will not involve nuclear material," Mohamed ElBaradei, the IAEA director, said at a UN meeting. North Korea said on Friday that it was working to restart the Yongbyon complex which is used to produce plutonium, the basis of its atomic bomb programme. It abandoned its decommissioning efforts last month, saying that the US had failed to keep its part of the deal on freezing nuclear activity.

### **Energy aid**

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said that Pyongyang could lose out on energy aid if it continues restoring its Yongbyon nuclear reactor. "If North Korea continues its restoration activities, the economic and energy aid in line with disablement will have to be affected," Moon Tae Young,

South Korean foreign ministry spokesman, told reporters in Seoul.

North Korea was promised one million tonnes of heavy fuel oil or equivalent energy aid in return for disabling its nuclear reactor. Work to disable Yongbyon began last November and in June, the main cooling tower at the plant was demolished in what was seen as a sign of the North's commitment to the disarmament process.

In the same month, North Korean officials handed the US a list of its nuclear programmes and facilities in return for what it says was a promise that Washington would start the process of removing North Korea from the US "terrorism" blacklist. Washington has refused to begin that process until the North agrees to an international plan to verify the nuclear declaration. As a result North Korea announced in mid-August that it was calling a halt to disablement work at Yongbyon.

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2008/09/2008922103434524632.html>

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September 23, 2008

### **N. Korea Is Closer to Restart of Nuclear Program**

By ELAINE SCIOLINO

PARIS — North Korea asked the International Atomic Energy Agency to remove seals and surveillance cameras at the North's nuclear reprocessing facility, the agency's director said Monday, in a setback for both the Bush administration and an international nuclear disarmament agreement.

The move, following reports that the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il may be seriously ill, offers further proof that North Korea plans to renew activity at the facility that separates plutonium for use in nuclear weapons at its complex at Yongbyon. It further suggests that the country may be preparing to restart its nuclear weapons program.

North Korea has "asked the agency's inspectors to remove seals and surveillance equipment to enable them to carry out tests at the reprocessing plant, which they say will not involve nuclear material," the agency's director, Mohamed ElBaradei, said in a speech to the group's 35-country board of governors. He confirmed that the agency's inspectors had observed the restoration of some equipment that North Korea had previously removed during the dismantling process.

In a telephone conversation with President Hu Jintao of China on Sunday, President Bush expressed concern about North Korea's announcement last week of its intention to restore the nuclear facilities at Yongbyon to their original state, according to the White House.

"The two presidents agreed that they would work hard to convince the North to continue down the path established in the six-party talks toward denuclearization," the White House spokesman, Gordon D. Johndroe, said on Monday. China is North Korea's main ally and provides the reclusive state with food and fuel. The United States, Russia, Japan, China and South Korea have been engaged with North Korea in tortured negotiations, which produced an agreement in

February 2007 for North Korea to abandon its nuclear activities in exchange for aid and diplomatic incentives.

Christopher R. Hill, the administration's chief negotiator in talks over the nuclear program, described North Korea's action as "a rough-and-tumble moment" and suggested that its defiance could be related to the health of Mr. Kim. "The six-party process has had its difficult moments in the past, and we're certainly experiencing another one now," Mr. Hill told reporters in New York, where President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice arrived for the opening of the United Nations General Assembly.

Despite North Korea's request to the I.A.E.A., Mr. Hill said he did not expect "any dramatic developments in a matter of days," indicating that a resumption of nuclear production could be weeks or months away. "I don't think there's any immediate potential for restarting the things," he said, "but obviously these reports are ones that we take very seriously." Since last November, North Korea had been dismantling the nuclear complex, where it had been manufacturing fuel for nuclear weapons under the complicated disarmament-for-aid agreement. But last month North Korea announced that it had stopped dismantling its nuclear facilities to protest the failure of the United States to fulfill a promise to remove it from its list of state sponsors of terrorism.

North Korea seemed to harden its position on Friday, saying that it no longer wanted to be removed from the list. "We can go our own way," a Foreign Ministry official was quoted as saying. Officially, Washington has said that it will remove North Korea from the list after it permits inspectors to verify claims about its production of nuclear weapons.

Arms control experts listed a number of possible reasons North Korea was threatening to resume its nuclear program. North Korean officials may believe that they can do so without suffering major penalties, the experts say, gambling that the Bush administration is too distracted to react. Or Mr. Kim's poor health may be giving hard-liners greater maneuvering space. The experts also say that the move by North Korea is dangerous because the reprocessing of nuclear fuel from spent fuel rods can begin within months. It would take years, by contrast, for North Korea to produce fresh nuclear fuel if it decided to restart its nuclear reactor, which is also at the complex at Yongbyon. "This is a dangerous, step-by-step degradation of the nuclear agreement," said David Albright, a former weapons inspector who now heads the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security. "North Korea may see it as part of a negotiation. But it's a provocative act."

In another development, Dr. ElBaradei said Monday that the United States and other countries should share intelligence documents with Iran that accuse the country of suspicious past nuclear weapons activity. "I call upon member states which provide the agency with documentation related to the alleged studies to authorize the agency to share it with Iran," Dr. ElBaradei said.

In a report this month, the agency criticized Iran for failing to provide its inspectors with documentation, information and access to experts to clear up questions about nuclear activities that date back years. Iran claims that the documents, most of them from American intelligence sources, are forgeries and that the charges are "baseless." Iran has demanded access to the documents, which the agency either does not have in its possession or does not have the authority to provide. Under the terms of a "work plan" negotiated more than a year ago with the agency, Iran agreed to a series of deadlines to resolve questions about its past nuclear activities.



But the most sensitive accusations — about the suspected military aspect of its nuclear program — hinge on the intelligence documents.

The United States, France and Britain will seek new sanctions against Iran at the United Nations because of its failure to comply with Security Council resolutions requiring it to suspend its production of enriched uranium, which can be used to produce electricity or to fuel weapons.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/world/asia/23nuke.html?\\_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/world/asia/23nuke.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin)

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Bloomberg News

September 23, 2008

### **Putin Gives Up on Bush, Complicating Iran, North Korea Efforts**

By Bill Varner

Sept. 23 (Bloomberg) -- Russia is intent on mending ties with the U.S. once President George W. Bush leaves the office on Jan. 20, prompting unprecedented interest in this year's presidential campaign, its UN ambassador said in an interview. In the meantime, Russia is unlikely to back new efforts to curtail the nuclear ambitions of Iran and North Korea. "There has been a standard in the history of Soviet and now Russian-American relations of common wisdom that there is not much difference between administrations; now that is not the case," said Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, the last spokesman for the Soviet Union's foreign ministry. "The problem is there" because of the dispute over Russian actions in Georgia, Churkin added before today's start of speeches by world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly. "But I don't think there is irreversible damage. We do not want to see our formats of cooperation disrupted."

Russia's military incursion into Georgia, a U.S. ally, caused a rift between leaders in Moscow and Washington unseen since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. As Bush gives his final United Nations speech today, Churkin and his bosses -- Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and President Dmitry Medvedev --- will be more focused on whether he will be replaced by Democratic Senator Barack Obama or Republican Senator John McCain. "There is no basis for healing between Bush and the Russians," said Ian Bremmer, president of the Eurasia Group, a New York-based political risk-analysis firm for businesses. "The international community will respond well to anyone who comes in after the Bush administration."

#### Russian Favorite

While Churkin wouldn't express a preference, polling shows that Russians overwhelmingly favor Obama. Both candidates have condemned Russia over the August war, which followed Georgia's attempt to retake the pro-Moscow breakaway region of South Ossetia. Obama has expressed support for engaging adversaries with diplomacy and handling world problems with a multilateral approach. McCain, meanwhile, has taken a harder line against Moscow, declaring "we are all Georgians" at one point and calling for Russia's eviction from the Group of Eight industrial nations. McCain has also proposed a "league of democracies" that would supplement UN efforts.

“The next administration has to find a way to reengage Russia,” said James Goldgeier, an analyst at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington. “Both candidates have been supportive of Georgia, but Russia has to be concerned about McCain saying they should be kicked out of the G-8” forum of major industrial nations.

## 100 Leaders

Bush will join more than 100 world leaders in addressing the UN General Assembly this week. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili are among the leaders set to be joined in New York by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who will head his nation's delegation. The week will include talks involving the U.S. and Russia on how the Security Council deals with Iran's defiance of demands to halt the enrichment of uranium and offer proof its nuclear intentions are peaceful. Last week, Russia agreed only to consider the possibility of further sanctions against Iran.

“We are not going to see any more sustained cooperation from Russia on Iran” until after Bush leaves office, Bremmer said. The U.S. and China need Russia's help to confront a major threat to a diplomatic effort to end North Korea's nuclear-arms program: the regime's decision to backtrack on the planned dismantling of its Yongbyon plutonium-making facility.

## France's Role

Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, said there's “no way to sugarcoat” the seriousness of the rift with Russia. He added that Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice would try in meetings with Russian officials this week to find common ground. Sarkozy will do his part to ease the friction, playing the type of mediating role that produced a cease-fire in Georgia, France's UN ambassador, Jean-Maurice Ripert, said.

McCain's hard line on Russia has worried other countries' UN ambassadors, some of whom worry that his “league of democracies” would sideline the world body. “These groups are always aimed at keeping people out,” South African Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo said. “We don't need anything that creates more division.”

## \$2.6 Billion

Obama has expressed clearer backing for the UN. He has said he would pay \$2.6 billion in overdue U.S. dues and wouldn't accept acrimony with Russia as “a preordained outcome,” according to Susan Rice, a senior foreign policy adviser to his campaign. “It is in the interests of the U.S. for Russia to play a responsible role in international institutions,” Rice said.

A Russian Public Opinion Research Center poll earlier this month showed that 27 percent of Russians support Obama compared with 6 percent for McCain. In the halls of UN headquarters, the support is more subtle. Ambassador Ricardo Arias of Panama, a current member of the UN Security Council, offered the type of carefully couched support for Obama that other diplomats privately share. “Diplomacy is dealing with your enemies; the rest is cocktail parties,” Arias said, referring to Obama's willingness to engage in direct talks with U.S. foes such as Iran and Syria. “This problem with Russia has to be healed, and the UN is the best venue for that to happen, but we need a new approach.”

U.S. and U.K. envoys say they've seen a hardening in Russian positions since the Georgia war. Russia blocked a proposed Security Council statement pressing Myanmar's military regime to move toward democracy and irritated the U.S. by pushing for an expression of concern for civilian deaths in Afghanistan in a resolution that extended the mandate of Western security forces.

Rice, while criticizing Russia's "worsening pattern of behavior" in a Sept. 18 speech in Washington, said she didn't want the UN Security Council to be "reverting to the gridlocked institution that it was during the Cold War" with the U.S. and Russia using their veto power over council actions.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=ablo4iRCTYGw&refer=worldwide#>

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London Daily Telegraph

September 20, 2008

### **Czechs and US Sign Missile Defense System Agreement**

US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and his Czech counterpart have signed an agreement clearing the way for stationing US forces to operate a missile defense radar in the Czech Republic. The status of forces agreement provides the legal basis for the US presence in the Czech Republic, and marks the last piece of a long negotiation over the radar, part of a European leg of the US missile defense system that has aroused intense Russian opposition. "This is the culmination of a process to draw our nations closer and help protect Europe," Mr. Gates said, adding that he hopes the Czech parliament ratifies the agreement.

The Czech radar would be paired with 10 interceptor missiles stationed in Poland with the aim of countering an emerging ballistic missile threat from a "rogue" state, such as Iran. Moscow has vehemently objected to the stationing of the missile defenses in the former Soviet bloc countries, insisting that it could one day be turned against Russia's nuclear deterrent. But Czech Defense Minister Vlasta Parkanova said she believed the missile defense system would make a significant contribution to regional security. She said the time it took to negotiate the agreement was proof that they were "tough but fair".

Mr. Gates said decisions on when construction of the radar would begin would await a technical study that is supposed to be concluded in November. If construction begins next year, the system could be in operation between 2011 and 2013. The US Defense Intelligence Agency says that Iran could have long-range missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons by 2015 to 2017.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/czechrepublic/2990578/Czechs-and-US-sign-missile-defence-system-agreement.html>

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Baltimore Sun

September 21, 2008

### **Probe is Said to Refute Nuclear Reactor Theory**

VIENNA, Austria--Partial results of samples from a Syrian site bombed by Israel show nothing to back up U.S. assertions that the target was a secret nuclear reactor, diplomats said yesterday. The diplomats cautioned that the results from the International Atomic Energy Agency probe are preliminary because findings of more detailed environmental tests are still outstanding. Still, two of the three who spoke to the Associated Press said that IAEA officials did not expect the results from the samples still being tested to strongly contradict the first results. All three diplomats were informed of the status of the IAEA probe but demanded anonymity because their information was confidential. Washington says that the Al Kibar site that Israel destroyed last year was a near-finished plutonium-producing reactor built with North Korean help.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/nation/bal-te.briefs213sep21,0,1761495.story>

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Washington Post  
September 22, 2008  
Pg. 13

**Fine Print**

**Senate Boosts Funding for Laser Weapons**

By Walter Pincus

The Senate has embraced last year's Defense Science Board conclusion that directed-energy weapons -- such as high-, medium- and low-power lasers -- hold great potential and should be developed as soon as possible. In the fiscal 2009 defense authorization bill, which was approved Wednesday, the Senate included additional funds for laser programs and a provision requiring Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates to accelerate work that would make directed-energy weapons operational in the near future.

Low-power lasers known as "dazzlers" are being used in Iraq, mounted on M-4 rifles, "to warn or temporarily incapacitate individuals," according to the Defense Science Board's report. Army, Special Forces and more recently Marine units are using them to warn or deter drivers approaching checkpoints and to "defuse potential escalation of force incidents," according to the report.

Marines were given approval to use a green laser whose beam can temporarily reduce a person's vision when aimed from a distance of 1,000 yards, according to the report. These "laser optical incapacitation devices" were being procured on a case-by-case basis. Laser use remains controversial because a protocol of the Geneva Conventions bans their use in combat when they are designed to cause permanent blindness.

Two years ago, when the lasers were introduced in Iraq, Army Lt. Col. Barry Venable, a Pentagon spokesman, said the devices were legal. "They don't blind people," he told reporters. "It's like shining a big light in your eyes," he said, adding that he did not know how long the "optical incapacitation" lasted.

The Senate Armed Services Committee, in its report on the fiscal 2009 authorization bill, asked about the progress of lasers. "Years of investment have not resulted in any current operational high-energy laser capability," the committee noted in its report. The science board said tactical laser systems could be developed for broader use because they "enable precision ground attack to

minimize collateral damage in urban conflicts." The report suggested, for example, that "future gunships could provide extended precision lethality and sensing."

The board also proposed using lasers to protect against rockets, artillery, mortars and unmanned airborne vehicles by blasting them out of the sky. Last month, the Army awarded Boeing \$36 million to continue development of a high-energy laser mounted on a truck that could hit overhead targets. But deployment is not expected until 2016, even if all goes well.

The Senate committee was critical of the "airborne laser" program, a first-generation missile defense system. It held back \$30 million from next year's budget and said funds for a second version would not be authorized until the first shoot-down test from a 747 aircraft is conducted at the end of 2009. More information is needed to determine whether the system "could eventually provide a militarily useful, operationally effective and affordable missile defense capability," the panel's report said.

Past Defense Science Board studies have had impact. A 2004 report recommended a "Manhattan Project" approach to take "available and emerging technologies . . . to identify objects or people of interest from surveillance data and to verify a specific individual's identification." It suggested that "biometrics, tags, object recognition and identification tokens" be harnessed with sensors and databases "to overcome the shortcomings of conventional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems."

Tags allow distant tracking or detection. Some tags are active, emitting radio waves that can be collected. Others are passive, including chemicals that give off a color when hit by an infrared beam. The board said these "represent a very important area for research and technology development."

Four years later, Washington Post Assistant Managing Editor Bob Woodward, discussing his new book, "The War Within," on CBS's "60 Minutes," attributed part of the success of the troop buildup in Iraq to "secret operational capabilities that have been developed by the military to locate, target and kill leaders of al-Qaeda in Iraq, insurgent leaders, renegade militia leaders. That is one of the true breakthroughs."

A recent congressional report said Special Forces in Iraq are using newly developed "sophisticated capabilities to identify, find, track, and kill or capture high-value individuals."

*National security and intelligence reporter Walter Pincus pores over the speeches, reports, transcripts and other documents that flood Washington and every week uncovers the fine print that rarely makes headlines -- but should.*

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/21/AR2008092102432\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/21/AR2008092102432_pf.html)

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GovernmentExecutive.com  
September 19, 2008

**Presidential Campaigns Urged To Prepare For DHS Transition**

By Brittany R. Ballenstedt

Neither presidential campaign has contacted the Homeland Security Department about critical transition issues, and that oversight could heighten the country's vulnerability to a terrorist attack, the department's top management official said on Thursday.

Elaine Duke, undersecretary for management at DHS, said the department is working to prepare itself for the handoff to a new administration and for a possible terrorist attack in the coming months. But it is the responsibility of the McCain and Obama campaigns right now to name key potential political appointees at the department. Duke testified before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia.

Frank Chellino, panel chairman of a DHS transition study at the National Academy of Public Administration, noted that NAPA has questioned why the campaigns have not reached out to Homeland Security's transition teams, saying it was critical to submit appointee paperwork prior to the election. "It seems to be an issue of who should be doing the contacting and when it's supposed to be done," he said.

The panel's ranking member, Sen. George Voinovich, R-Ohio, asked whether it would be helpful if the subcommittee sent the campaigns letters urging them to contact the DHS transition teams. "It would be a great idea for you to reach out to them," said Patricia McGinnis, president of the Council for Excellence in Government. "There's this funny dance that goes on this time of year. No one wants to be presumptuous by picking out the drapes or getting their nominees in place."

Voinovich said he and Subcommittee Chairman Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, also plan to advise all Senate committees on the qualities to look for in nominees and to encourage a speedier confirmation process. "There has to be a way we can move this thing along so we aren't the problem, when so often, we are the problem," he said.

DHS also is looking at how it can better manage the security and suitability processes required for political appointees. Beyond the security risk, Duke said, the government examines whether an individual is right for employment. "These are two time-intensive processes," she said. "For new employees at DHS who need both suitability and a clearance, we will run those [processes] in concurrence."

Meanwhile, Akaka expressed concern with the overall 18 percent vacancy rate in executive positions reported in NAPA's June study on the DHS transition. He noted specific concern with the 50 percent executive vacancy rate at the National Protection and Programs Directorate, as well as a 25 percent vacancy rate at the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"High vacancy rates will compound the burden placed on top career officials when appointees leave," Akaka said. "I know that DHS is working to address this situation, but time is running short." But Duke said DHS has reduced the number of vacancies across the department to 13 percent, with openings at NCPP and FEMA falling to 34 percent and 15 percent, respectively. "It's not what it needs to be," she said, "but we are managing it."

John Rollins, a terrorism and national security specialist at the Congressional Research Service, commended DHS for being further ahead in its transition planning than other security agencies. "This department is still young enough that it hasn't developed any bad practices with the

transition," he said. "For other agencies, this is a four- or eight-year activity, so complacency has set in and they'll approach it like they did prior to 9/11." Rollins and McGinnis expressed particular concern, however, with DHS' lack of transition planning with state and local officials. "You don't want to be exchanging business cards during an emergency," McGinnis said. "This is work to be done, related both to the transition period and our ongoing security."

But Duke said FEMA regularly works with the Northern Command and National Guard in conducting exercises with state and local governments. She said the department can go a step further to ensure that all contact information for new appointees is communicated to state and local governments. "The most important thing we can do is make sure they know who's going to be at DHS," she said. "The actual response won't change ... it's just knowing the right people."

[http://www.govexec.com/story\\_page.cfm?articleid=41008&sid=60](http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=41008&sid=60)

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CongressDaily.com (retrieved from NextGov.com)

September 22, 2008

### **Draft Cybersecurity Review Has DHS On Defensive**

Chris Strohm

The Homeland Security Department and a commission of cybersecurity experts are butting heads over how best to protect the country's computer networks in a dispute that the next president and Congress will have to settle. The commission, established by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, doubts that Homeland Security should be in charge of securing federal computer networks, according to a draft report under consideration by its members.

Comment on this article in The Forum. "One of the first tasks of the new administration will be to fix the Department of Homeland Security," the draft states. "Any cybersecurity effort will face serious problems if the Department implements it as it is currently configured. There is a universal belief at present that DHS is not capable of discharging the evolving cybersecurity mission."

Homeland Security was given responsibility for securing federal civilian networks and key private sector networks under the Bush administration's multibillion-dollar cybersecurity initiative, most of which remains classified. But the commission has been unable to find out who is in charge of overall coordination for cybersecurity efforts, said James Lewis, director of the CSIS technology and public policy program.

"This is now a national security problem," he said. "It needs to be treated like any other national security problem and coordinated through the White House." Lewis cautioned that the draft report is likely to change as panel members work on it. He also said the members are wrestling with what role, if any, Homeland Security should have in cybersecurity efforts.

The commission was established with the support of House Homeland Security Emerging Threats Subcommittee Chairman Jim Langevin, D-R.I., and ranking member Michael McCaul, R-Texas, to make cybersecurity recommendations to the next president.



A top Homeland Security official is defending the administration's cybersecurity approach and the department's work. "I can say for the first time we've got a comprehensive strategy," Robert Jamison, undersecretary for Homeland Security's national protection and programs directorate, said in an interview with reporters Friday. "I think absolutely the last thing you want to do is to break off that path and start talking about reorganization of roles and responsibilities," he added. "I think you've got to stay the course and keep moving out."

Jamison said the comprehensive strategy is supported across federal agencies and backed up by implementation plans and funding. With Homeland Security in the lead role, he said the number of Internet access points across the government has been reduced from more than 4,000 to fewer than 1,000. By the end of the year, that number will be fewer than 100. Jamison added that devices will be installed across federal civilian networks by the middle of next year that provide real-time detection of network intrusions. He said the commission has not contacted or met with him or his staff, and he encouraged it to do so before issuing a final report.

Lewis said the commission has been briefed by Homeland Security officials and has interaction with the department. "The people who are most vehemently opposed to keeping stuff at DHS are the people who used to work there," Lewis said.

[http://www.nextgov.com/site\\_services/print\\_article.php?StoryID=ng\\_20080922\\_6564](http://www.nextgov.com/site_services/print_article.php?StoryID=ng_20080922_6564)

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GovernmentExecutive.com

September 19, 2008

### **Agencies Urge Congress To Act On Threat Posed By Stateless Sublike Watercraft**

By Katherine McIntire Peters

On Friday, senior officials from agencies at Homeland Security, Justice and the Defense departments, and the White House urged lawmakers to act on legislation that would criminalize the operation of stateless self-propelled semisubmersible vessels before Congress adjourns on Sept. 26. Twice in the previous six days, the Coast Guard boarded such submarinelike craft loaded with cocaine bound for the U.S. market. Both vessels, which are about 60 feet long and can be underway for several thousand miles, were built in Colombia and used sophisticated electronics, Coast Guard officials said. The concern is such vessels, known as SPSS craft, could be used to ferry weapons of mass destruction to the United States. They are difficult to detect on radar and relatively easy to build and operate. Officials estimate more than 32 percent of all cocaine smuggled into the country now is transported this way. At a briefing at Coast Guard headquarters with representatives from the Navy, Defense, Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the White House Office of Drug Control Policy, officials urged the Senate to take up S. 3351, which passed the House in late July as the Drug Trafficking Vessel Interdiction Act, or H.R. 6295. The law would criminalize the operation of submersible or semisubmersible watercraft without identifiable nationality in international waters -- regardless of cargo. It also includes protections for researchers and explorers conducting legitimate business.



Smugglers historically have used fishing vessels and go-fast boats to transport cocaine. "This is the new method," said John Walters, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The growing use of these vessels has created a sense of urgency among federal agencies. In the first three quarters of 2008, the Coast Guard recorded 62 "events" regarding SPSS vessels. In the previous six and a half years, there were fewer than 30 such encounters. Boarding such craft is particularly hazardous. One of the most recent incidents was on Sept. 13, 350 miles west of Guatemala. A Navy aircraft detected a 59-foot steel and fiberglass SPSS and reported the location to the USS McInerney operating nearby. That night, Coast Guard law enforcement detachment 404 left the McInerney aboard small boats and boarded the SPSS. When the smugglers realized they had been boarded they reversed the engines at a high speed in an attempt to throw off the Coast Guard personnel. They then attempted to scuttle the craft but ultimately complied with orders to close the valves that were flooding the SPSS.

The case was unusual because Coast Guard personnel were able to apprehend the four smugglers and retrieve seven tons of cocaine, making criminal prosecution of the smugglers possible. Typically, smugglers are able to sink the craft, along with incriminating evidence, before it can be seized, making prosecution impossible. "Boarding parties perform critically important work," said Richard Douglas, deputy assistant secretary of Defense for counternarcotics, counterproliferation and global threats. The legislation criminalizing the operation of SPSS craft will go a long way toward prosecuting would-be smugglers, he said.

[http://www.govexec.com/story\\_page.cfm?articleid=41013&dcn=e\\_gvet](http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=41013&dcn=e_gvet)

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New York Times  
September 23, 2008

### **New Process Eliminates a Fertilizer's Blast Threat**

By MATTHEW L. WALD

A major chemical company will announce Tuesday that it has found a way to render nitrogen fertilizer useless as an explosive, and improve its value to some crops. The company, Honeywell, of Morris Township, N.J., has patented a method for combining ammonium nitrate fertilizer with a second type of fertilizer, ammonium sulfate. Ammonium nitrate can be soaked in diesel fuel to produce a powerful bomb and is a favorite of terrorists, but when chemically tied to the ammonium sulfate, its chemical structure is changed so that it is no longer explosive. Chemists had been looking for ways to render ammonium nitrate nonexplosive since the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was destroyed by a truck bomb in 1995, killing 168.

In 2006, Canadian authorities arrested 17 people who they said were planning to use such bombs in Ontario. The Department of Homeland Security has certified the new fertilizer, which Honeywell calls ammonium sulfate nitrate, under a federal program devised to encourage such innovations by offering the manufacturers immunity from liability, according to Honeywell.

The Homeland Security Department has been experimenting with diluting ammonium nitrate with coal dust. Growmark Inc., a cooperative based in Bloomington, Ill., distributes a fertilizer

that blends ammonium nitrate and calcium. An agriculture expert not affiliated with Honeywell, Jack Rabin, associate director for farm programs at the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, said many companies were looking for ways to render ammonium nitrate inert, because the Department of Homeland Security requires that farmers safeguard their stockpiles of the widely used fertilizer and report their inventories to the government.

“We are not going to replace ammonium nitrate fertilizer in the U.S. and around the world,” Mr. Rabin said. “It’s too good, too important and too valuable.” One problem, Mr. Rabin said, was that if nitrogen is the essential chemical in the fertilizer, then diluting it with other materials raises the number of tons that must be carried to the fields to get the desired amount of nitrogen. A fertilizer incorporating sulfur, as the Honeywell material does, would be helpful in the western United States, where sulfur is commonly used to lower pH values toward neutral, he said. But, he said, “in much of the world, the soils are too acid already.” But Mark Murray, director of strategic marketing for Honeywell’s resins and chemical business, said, the market was very broad. “Anywhere where ammonium nitrate is used today, this alternate form could be used effectively,” Mr. Murray said.

Honeywell is already a large producer of ammonium sulfate fertilizer. The new fertilizer has less sulfur than ammonium sulfate, making it more widely usable, Honeywell said, and includes a mixture of nitrogen that is released promptly and nitrogen that becomes available slowly, making it a superior fertilizer.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/us/23fertilizer.html?sq=fertilizer&st=cse&scp=2&pagewanted=print>

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GovernmentExecutive.com

September 22, 2008

### **Air Force To Strengthen Inspections And Expand Training For Nuclear Mission**

By Katherine McIntire Peters

Air Force leaders have delayed making commitments to far-reaching organizational changes recommended by a task force on nuclear weapons management, but have agreed to a number of narrower reforms. During a Sept. 18 summit at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, key leaders from the Air Force, other Defense Department agencies, the National Security Council, the Energy Department and RAND Corp., discussed ways to improve stewardship of nuclear weapons. Air Force officials agreed to consider a proposal for a significant reorganization at a meeting of senior service leaders in early October.

In a report earlier this month, the Defense Task Force on Nuclear Weapons Management, chaired by former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, urged the Air Force to replace its Space Command with a Strategic Command, vested with authority and accountability for the nuclear mission. In addition, the report recommended all bomber aircraft be consolidated into a single force assigned to the Strategic Command. As the single major command responsible for the nuclear mission, Strategic Command would advocate for resources, provide clear lines of authority and accountability, and ensure appropriate staffing and expertise at all levels of the

nuclear mission, Schlesinger said at a Pentagon briefing earlier this month. The bomber force assigned to the command would provide trained forces for conventional missions as well as manage the nuclear deterrent mission.

Air Force Capt. Michael Andrews said service leaders would talk about those changes during a three-day October conference at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio that will include the service's four-star generals and acting secretary Michael Donley. But, in a statement released over the weekend, the Air Force outlined four reforms agreed upon at last week's summit:

The Nuclear Weapons Center at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., will be expanded and given responsibility for all nuclear sustainment activities, including those at weapons storage areas in the continental United States. This change is intended to clarify ambiguity in the chain of command. The nuclear inspection process will be strengthened and centralized, built upon common policies and procedures integrated with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. Service leaders will consolidate and expand training within the Air Education and Training Command for security personnel assigned to nuclear duties. A new headquarters office will provide singular focus on nuclear matters within the service.

The Schlesinger task force was highly critical of the Air Force nuclear inspection program. "Processes are not standardized across major commands, inspectors are not appropriately trained, and inspections are not sufficiently comprehensive and frequent," the report noted. The task force was especially critical of the fact that inspections were pre-announced, creating little incentive for personnel to remain vigilant around the clock. As a result of that criticism, the Air Force inspector general now is rewriting regulations to require all commands to conduct no-notice nuclear inspections," Andrews said.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates created the Schlesinger task force in June to review Air Force lapses in nuclear weapons management, as well as the other military services' nuclear inventory control procedures. The review was sparked by the discovery earlier this year that forward-section assemblies used on Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles were erroneously shipped to Taiwan in October and November 2006. That discovery followed another serious incident in which an Air Force bomber crew mistakenly flew nuclear weapons from Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota to Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana in August 2007.

The Schlesinger task force found, "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." That erosion of capability and apparent disinterest in addressing it led Gates to fire the Air Force chief of staff and secretary in June. Current Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz and acting Secretary Michael Donley have repeatedly said their top priority is to rebuild the service's nuclear expertise and accountability. In July, the Air Force established its own nuclear task force, made up of about 30 subject matter specialists from across the service's nuclear enterprise. That task force is currently tracking more than 180 corrective actions and analyzing causes of the problems.

[http://www.govexec.com/story\\_page\\_pf.cfm?articleid=41027&printerfriendlyvers=1](http://www.govexec.com/story_page_pf.cfm?articleid=41027&printerfriendlyvers=1)

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GovernmentExecutive.com

September 22, 2008

## **The Winner Is . . .**

What's Brewin'

By Bob Brewin

I have picked up strong signals that Pentagon leadership has decided that the U.S. Strategic Command in Omaha, Neb., will create and run a joint cyber command, dashing any hopes the Air Force has to own all things cyber in the Defense Department. I'm told STRATCOM will announce formation of the new organization by the end of October, with a formal stand-up of the group planned by spring 2009. Putting STRATCOM in charge of a joint cyber command makes more sense, sources told me, than handing over the mission to the zoomies, because STRATCOM already has under its wing the Joint Task Force-Global Network Operations, which is charged with defense of the military's Global Information Grid.

The new joint cyber command will have the responsibilities of network attack as well as defense, and it makes sense to put the two missions under one organization, sources told me.

### England: No One Owns Cyber

Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England drove home this point in a May 12 memo in which he said, "Because all the combatant commands, military departments and other defense components need the ability to work unhindered in cyberspace, the domain does not fall within the purview of any particular department or component." England directed the Pentagon policy shop and the joint staff to define cyber operations so Defense can staff, train and equip forces for operations in the new warfighting domain.

So, where do the forces come from?

### Hope for Air Force Cyber Command

My sources tell me that STRATCOM will rely on the three services to provide personnel and equipment for the new joint cyber command, which may give a boost to the planned Air Force Cyber Command, the formation of which was abruptly halted by its leadership last month. Since STRATCOM will need a new breed of cyber space warriors -- and the Air Force had planned to train them -- a new AFCYBER unit could definitely have a key role, along with the Naval Network Warfare Command and the Army Network Enterprise Technology Command.

I wonder if the Air Force will learn to play well with the other children in the new cyber schoolyard instead of conducting a last-ditch effort to keep all the toys to itself.

### NIPRNet's Achilles' Heel

Scenarios of a future cyber war depict a technologically savvy adversary using all kinds of Internet attack tools to take down U.S. electric power networks, landing a hard blow to the economy and cyber bombing us back to the Stone Age.

A more realistic, but equally scary scenario, is selectively targeting Defense's Nonclassified Internet Protocol Router Network (NIPRNet), which James Mulvenon, deputy director for Advanced Studies and Analysis at the Center for Intelligence Research and Analysis, which is operated by the Defense Group Inc., said the Chinese military views as the Achilles' heel of U.S. military operations.

Mulvenon, speaking in May at a little-noticed hearing of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, said the NIPRNet supports the automated logistics functions needed to shore up U.S. reaction to a Chinese incursion against Taiwan. Take down the NIPRNet, which rides on commercial networks, and the Chinese can frustrate U.S. operations in support of Taiwan, he told the hearing.

#### The JTF-GNO View

When Air Force Col. Gary McAlum was director of operations for the Joint Task Force-Global Network Operations (he's now a consultant with Deloitte & Touche LLP), he told the China panel that he agreed with Mulvenon. Defense uses the NIPRNet to pay bills, order spare parts, conduct contracting and manage deployments, so China's ability to exploit the network is a "huge concern," he said.

Oh well, maybe the Homeland Security Department can defend the NIPRNet along with everything else it's going to do as the lead agency in the Bush administration's national cybersecurity initiative.

I have friends in Defense who say giving DHS the lead in protecting the nation's networks from cyberattack could result in a revival of the carrier pigeon for transmitting secure messages.

[http://www.govexec.com/story\\_page\\_pf.cfm?articleid=41014&printerfriendlyvers=1](http://www.govexec.com/story_page_pf.cfm?articleid=41014&printerfriendlyvers=1)

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Wall Street Journal  
September 22, 2008  
Pg. 20

**Pakistan Sees Al Qaeda Links in Hotel Blast**  
*Officials Say Attack Shows Terror Cells Operate Freely*  
By Zahid Hussain

ISLAMABAD -- Pakistani officials said Saturday's suicide blast that killed 53 people at the Islamabad Marriott Hotel bore the hallmarks of al Qaeda and showed how the group was operating freely inside Pakistan and was determined to wreak havoc on the nation's already weak economy.

Rehman Malik, Pakistan's interior minister, said Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, an outlawed militant umbrella group operating from Pakistan's lawless tribal region, was involved in the attack. The group is said to be closely linked with al Qaeda, which has grown in strength in Pakistan. Many

other Pakistani militant groups have mutated into small cells, after being banned, and work as an extension of al Qaeda.

Officials said Pakistan Taliban Movement, a little-known Islamist militant outfit that claimed responsibility to private television channels, was one such cell and is part of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan network.

Yousuf Raza Gilani, the prime minister, said the bomber had attacked the hotel only after tight security prevented him from reaching Parliament or the prime minister's office. "The purpose was to destabilize democracy," Mr. Gilani told reporters Sunday. "They want to destroy us economically. Pakistan's economy already is suffering and the blast at a hotel that was popular with foreign visitors and well-heeled Pakistanis could accelerate capital flight and further discourage investors. Among the dead were the Czech ambassador to Pakistan, Ivo Zdarek, 47 years old, and two members of the U.S. armed forces who the U.S. Defense Department said were assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. "The Islamabad bombing dents the already low confidence of international investors in Pakistan," said Muddassar Malik, chief executive of BMA Capital, a securities firm in Karachi.

Rescue teams searched the blackened hotel room by room Sunday. But the temperatures remained high and fires were still being put out in some parts. A senior official said there could still be bodies inside. Some 250 people were injured in the blast by a suicide bomber who rammed an explosive-laden truck into the hotel's outer gates. Many of the guests staying in the hotel died of intense heat caused by the explosion and flaming gas from ruptured gas lines. Doctors at the city's main hospital said the death toll could rise.

President Asif Ali Zardari said the attack wouldn't deter Pakistan from fighting terrorism. "The terrorists have turned the happy moment of the restoration of democracy into grief," he said in a television address early Sunday before leaving for the United Nations in New York, where he will meet President George W. Bush.

It wouldn't be the first time al Qaeda has been involved in an attack in Pakistan's capital. In June, a suicide car bomber killed at least six people near the Danish embassy in Islamabad. A statement attributed to al Qaeda took responsibility for that blast, which was believed to have targeted Denmark because of the publication there of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad.

The latest attack came as Pakistani forces stepped up an operation against Islamist militants in the Bajur tribal region, which is viewed by Pakistani and Western intelligence agencies as the center of al Qaeda activities. Many observers suspect the Marriott attack was a retaliation to the military offensive.

Al Qaeda and its allies among tribal militants have repeatedly warned they will increase attacks in Pakistan's heartland if the military operation isn't stopped.

Anti-American sentiments also are running high after an increase in missile strikes from U.S. pilotless drones against suspected militant hideouts inside Pakistan.

The attack also raises questions about security in the capital, which already was at a high level because of Mr. Zardari's address to a joint session of Parliament hours before the bomb detonated.

<http://wsj.com/article/SB122200799120560505.html>

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The HINDU

### **Marriott bombing challenge to democracy in Pak: Zardari**

Monday, 22 September 2008

New York (PTI): Describing the deadly suicide bombing at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad as a "challenge" to democracy in Pakistan, President Asif Ali Zardari has vowed to fight terrorism "shoulder-to-shoulder" with the world.

Zardari said the attack is a signal from the terrorists and appealed to the international community to take it seriously. "My hearts go out to the people. I want the world to understand that this is a signal from the terrorists. They (terrorists) are challenging this democracy of Pakistan," he told NBC in an interview, hours after the deadly bombing on Saturday that claimed 53 lives.

"They are challenging the people of Pakistan. They are challenging the world. And we are there to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the world, looking the terrorists in the eye. And we will fight them," the President, who is now here to participate in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meet, said.

On the repeated incursions by US-led coalition forces into the Pakistan territory from Afghanistan, he said the government has ordered the Armed Forces not to allow outsiders into the territory. "Our orders are clear, not to allow any incursion of anybody in Pakistan. If American troops are coming in, without letting us know or without Pakistan's permission, they are violating the UN charter and we will ask them to leave," Zardari, who is also the co-chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP), said.

<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/003200809222132.htm>

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The Australian

September 23, 2008

### **Pakistan Leaders in Narrow Escape**

Bruce Loudon, South Asia correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's top political and military leadership, including the newly elected President and Prime Minister, came close to being killed in the al-Qa'ida suicide bomb attack on Islamabad's Marriott hotel.

Interior Ministry boss Rehman Malik said last night that President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and army commander Ashfaq Kayani were scheduled to be at a dinner in the hotel when the 600kg bomb went off on Saturday night, killing at least 53 people.

The dinner had been planned to mark Iftar - when Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast -- following Mr Zardari's first speech to a joint session of parliament.

At the last minute, apparently on the orders of Mr Zardari and Mr Gilani, it was decided to shift the dinner to the Prime Minister's heavily guarded residence.

"It would have been a great catastrophe," Dr Rehman said.

While Dr Rehman did not say why the Marriott dinner was cancelled, it is believed that intelligence services got wind of a possible terror strike and advised that the venue should be changed.

Dr Rehman's disclosure last night also raises the possibility that the terrorists responsible for the attack had received information that the top leadership was due to meet at the Marriott.

CCTV footage shows that the suicide bomber, at the wheel of a truck loaded with building materials, had made a determined attempt to break through the barriers at the hotel's main gate and drive into the lobby. Had he succeeded, bomb experts believe, he would have collapsed the entire hotel, killing hundreds of people rather than the 53 people now believed to have died.

"Had the leadership been inside the Marriott at the time, many would have been killed," a security expert said last night.

The disclosure came as thousands of troop reinforcements were being rushed to key battle zones in Pakistan last night as the Government ordered a major intensification in the military offensive against al-Qa'ida and the Taliban.

An official told The Australian: "We're going to add to pressure on al-Qa'ida and the Taliban. If it's a showdown they want, they're going to get it."

The deployment of extra troops to the Bajaur Tribal Agency and the Swat Valley, to the north of the capital, came as British Airways announced yesterday it had suspended all flights to Pakistan following the Marriott bombing.

As Mr Zardari headed to the UN in New York for a showdown with US President George W. Bush, authorities announced the arrest of five suspects, including two Muslim clerics, over the Marriott blast.

Most analysts believe the outrage over the US military attacks in Pakistan's territory - and the alliance between Washington and Islamabad in the war on terror - lie behind the suicide bombing campaign that has killed 781 people so far this year.

The tense standoff between the two nominal allies over the cross-border raids intensified when it was reported yesterday that Pakistani forces had opened fire on two intruding US helicopter gunships after they entered the militant stronghold of North Waziristan, forcing them to retreat back into Afghanistan.

Mr Zardari is expected to take a strong line with Mr Bush, telling him the US raids in Pakistan are only inflaming support for al-Qa'ida and the Taliban in the tribal areas.

Sources say Mr Zardari is determined to persuade Mr Bush to "leave things to us" "We can do the job against the militants if only the Americans will butt out," one said yesterday.



Mr Zardari was expected to point to the military operations in Bajaur, in which Islamabad claims to have killed upwards of 700 militants in recent weeks, most of them from al-Qa'ida, and in the Swat valley, in demonstrating how Pakistan can deal effectively with the militants.

One Asian diplomat said yesterday: "Zardari simply has to get the Americans to back off. He has to persuade them they're causing more problems for the Government in Islamabad than they are solving.

"In the current environment in Pakistan there is nothing more incendiary, nothing that more provokes people, than interference by the Americans or being seen to be doing the bidding of the Americans."

Searchers made their way to the top floors of the Marriott yesterday as they looked for more bodies in the 300-plus rooms of the charred hotel.

The first of the suspects picked up over the hotel bombing was reported last night to be an imam arrested at his mosque in the city of Gujranwala, in the Punjab province that adjoins Islamabad.

Arrested with him was said to have been an al-Qa'ida member suspected of involvement in a previous attempt to assassinate former president Pervez Musharraf in Rawalpindi.

Later, police are said to have raided another mosque in the Punjab and arrested a further two suspects.

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24387968-2703,00.html>

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PakTribune

### **Al-Qaeda threatens France and Spain**

Monday, 22 September 2008

A leader of the Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb has threatened France and Spain in an audio message broadcast on jihadist Internet forums on Monday.

"To those that are involved in the war against Islam and have betrayed the Islamic nation, we say to them: Repent before God punishes you with his hands and with ours," said Abdel Malik Droukedel, who uses the name Abu Musab Abdel Wudud.

"This is because judgement day is close and punishment is imminent. And whoever among the treacherous apostates thinks that France is in a position to ensure its safety, we tell them they are wrong, because France will not be in a position to do it, and will be worried for its safety."

In the audio message, entitled "Message to our nation in the Islamic Maghreb", Droukedel reminds his listeners about Spain and Morocco's territorial dispute over the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.

"Dear nation, it is not conceivable for any Muslim that loves Islam to speak of the Maghreb without remembering Ceuta and Melilla, occupied by Spain without remembering the injustice suffered by our nation," said Droukedel.

"The complicity between Spain and international organisations such as the Arab League, the Islamic Conference and the United Nations is clear."

Melilla and Ceuta are autonomous cities administered by Spain and considered by neighbouring Morocco to be an integral part of its territory and of immense political and economic significance.

Morocco claims both locations to be "despoiled" territories, calling them by their Arabic equivalents of Sebta and Melillia. The cities have been under Spanish control for over 400 years.

In the message, Droukedel also speaks against new NATO military bases in North Africa and accuses Moroccan King Mohammed VI of having betrayed the prophet Mohammed by having a Danish embassy in his territory.

Regarding Tunisia, Droukedel accuses the government of being anti-Islamic and of passing laws against the implementation of Islamic Sharia law.

Speaking about Mauritania, he reminds his listeners about Nouakchott's diplomatic relations with Israel, while he claims that Algeria is suffering from political `interference` by France.

"I assure you all that we do not kill innocent people and we will prevent the spilling of Muslim blood," he said.

The Al-Qaeda leader says he will continue his fight to drive "France and the US from our country" and asks Algerian citizens to stay away from foreign organisations or government buildings because they are targets for attacks.

Droukedel's message was aimed at Muslims in North Africa, and was also translated into French.

The Al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb evolved from the Salafite Group for Preaching and Combat, initially formed to create an Islamic state in Algeria, but now believed to have more widespread goals.

<http://paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?205975>

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Boston Globe (AP)

September 20, 2008

### **Al Qaeda Video Warns Of Afghan Attack**

By Lee Keath, Associated Press

CAIRO - In a video marking the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Al Qaeda threatened major new attacks in Afghanistan and dismissed setbacks in Iraq, vowing to continue its fight. The video was released yesterday, more than a week after the anniversary.

The lag in release, apparently due to problems on websites where Al Qaeda posts its videos, raised questions among counterterror specialists over whether the terror network's propaganda machine was faltering.

The delay deflated what is usually a media splash for Al Qaeda. In previous years, it released a string of videos on the attack's anniversary, featuring leaders trumpeting triumphs. Osama bin Laden spoke in one last year, making his first appearance in nearly three years.

Al Qaeda had promised a similar event this year, announcing in a Sept. 8 Web advertisement that it would release a video that would bring joy to its followers. It sought to build drama by promising a surprise speaker, showing him in silhouette with a question mark over his face. But soon after, the Islamic militant Web forums traditionally used by Al Qaeda to post such videos went down and have remained off. The reason is not known. The 90-minute video, titled "The Results of Seven Years of Crusades," was finally released yesterday, according to two US groups that monitor militant messages.

It features speeches by bin Laden's top deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri, and other top figures in the terror network, as well as the final testament of Ahmed al-Ghamdi, one of the hijackers in the Sept. 11 attack. He was apparently the "surprise" speaker, SITE Intelligence and IntelCenter said.

In the video, Al Qaeda's top commander in Afghanistan, Mustafa Abu al-Yazeed, said the "mujahedeen [holy warriors] are on the increase day after day" in that country. "We inform the forces of the cross and their apostate agents that the mujahedeen's policy in the coming stage, Allah permitting, is going to be more major, large-scale attacks," he said, according to a transcript by SITE.

Elsewhere in the video, a leading Al Qaeda cleric, known as Sheik Attiyatullah, dismissed claims that the US and the Iraqi military were defeating the terror group's branch in Iraq. "The Americans have not won nor has their security plan succeeded," he said.

He acknowledged a "decline in the number of operations [in Iraq] and decline in the number of losses in the ranks of the Americans," but said that "this is something natural, as everything has its ups and downs, and every stage has its own circumstances."

"The Americans are without a doubt going to pull out of Iraq, dragging their tails in defeat," he said.

[http://www.boston.com/news/world/africa/articles/2008/09/20/al\\_qaeda\\_video\\_warns\\_of\\_afghan\\_attack/](http://www.boston.com/news/world/africa/articles/2008/09/20/al_qaeda_video_warns_of_afghan_attack/)

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Washington Post  
September 20, 2008  
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**A Modernized Taliban Thrives In Afghanistan**  
***Militia Operates a Parallel Government***

By Pamela Constable, Washington Post Foreign Service

KABUL, Sept. 19 -- Just one year ago, the Taliban insurgency was a furtive, loosely organized guerrilla force that carried out hit-and-run ambushes, burned empty schools, left warning letters at night and concentrated attacks in the southern rural regions of its ethnic and religious heartland.

Today it is a larger, better armed and more confident militia, capable of mounting sustained military assaults. Its forces operate in virtually every province and control many districts in areas ringing the capital. Its fighters have bombed embassies and prisons, nearly assassinated the president, executed foreign aid workers and hanged or beheaded dozens of Afghans.

The new Taliban movement has created a parallel government structure that includes defense and finance councils and appoints judges and officials in some areas. It offers cash to recruits and presents letters of introduction to local leaders. It operates Web sites and a 24-hour propaganda apparatus that spins every military incident faster than Afghan and Western officials can manage.

"This is not the Taliban of Emirate times. It is a new, updated generation," said Waheed Mojda, a former foreign ministry aide under the Taliban Islamic Emirate, which ruled most of the country from 1996 to 2001. "They are more educated, and they don't punish people for having CDs or cassettes," he said. "The old Taliban wanted to bring sharia, security and unity to Afghanistan. The new Taliban has much broader goals -- to drive foreign forces out of the country and the Muslim world."

In late 2001, U.S. forces made common cause with ethnic groups in Afghanistan's north to overthrow the Taliban, in response to Osama bin Laden's use of the country as a base. Hamid Karzai was tapped as president by the United States and other powers, then elected to the job. In the early years, much of the deeply conservative Muslim country was largely peaceful and secure.

Over the past two years, the Taliban's revival has been fueled by fast-growing popular dissatisfaction with Karzai's government, which has failed to bring services and security to much of the country. Deepening public resentment against civilian deaths caused by U.S. and NATO alliance airstrikes is another factor.

No one here believes that the insurgents, estimated at 10,000 to 15,000 fighters, are currently capable of seizing the capital of Kabul or toppling the government, which is backed by more than 130,000 international troops. But a series of spectacular urban attacks in recent months, notably the bombing of the Indian Embassy and an armed assault on a parade reviewing stand where Karzai sat, have turned Kabul into a maze of bunkers and barricades that drive officialdom ever farther from the public.

In many regions a short drive from the capital, some of them considered safe even six months ago, residents and officials said the Taliban now controls roads and villages, patrolling in trucks and recruiting new fighters. Its members execute government employees, bomb and burn cargo trucks on the highway, and search bus passengers for foreign passports and cellphones programmed with official numbers.

"Our staff members don't want to commute to the capital anymore," said Nader Nadery, an official of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. "They say, 'If the Taliban find my cellphone and call you, please tell them I am a shopkeeper.'" The Taliban is "creating an environment of fear, and it is working very well, because the people have no hope of being protected if they stand up against them," Nadery added.

Abdul Jabbar, a former anti-Soviet guerrilla commander and a member of parliament from Ghazni province, said he no longer dares visit his home district. Interviewed in Kabul, he said

Taliban leaders asked him to leave the government and join their cause, but he refused and now fears being killed. Last week, three Ghazni residents were hanged by the Taliban, which called them government spies.

"The other day, a Taliban commander called me and said I should come help him to free Afghanistan from the foreigners," Jabbar recounted. "I asked him, 'What do you want me to do? Kill a teacher? Kidnap an engineer? Capture a U.N. vehicle?' The people are not happy about the Taliban, but the government is weak, and the foreign forces have not brought us security. What choice do we have?"

In Wardak, the next province toward Kabul along a highway that is under constant Taliban attack, residents said they now ask relatives from the capital not to travel there for weddings or funerals.

Roshanak Wardak, the only private obstetrician in the region, said that since last spring, Taliban leaders have recruited dozens of young men from her town. Wardak, who is also a legislator, said people in her province may not like the Taliban, but they relate to those in the movement as fellow Afghans and Muslims, at a time of growing public disenchantment with U.S. and NATO military forces.

"Their popularity is increasing day by day, because the government has done nothing for our province," she said. "They take our innocent boys and tell them Islam is in danger. They offer them money and weapons. Now everyone is becoming a Talib. It is a great game, and they are the fuel."

As in Ghazni, many of the Taliban supporters in Wardak are Pashtuns, members of the country's largest ethnic group. They believe that rival ethnic groups unfairly rule the country with the help of foreign soldiers. Though Karzai is a Pashtun, he is viewed in Taliban ranks as a traitor to his religion and community.

One aspect of the game the Taliban now clearly dominates is the propaganda war over battlefield victories, defeats and casualties. Once composed of largely illiterate fighters and clerics who shunned modern technology as un-Islamic, the Taliban now uses a variety of high-tech means to communicate its version of events, often far faster than its adversaries.

This issue has crystallized with the controversy over civilian casualties inflicted by U.S. and NATO airstrikes, especially a village bombing last month near Herat in western Afghanistan. Although civilian deaths have been frequent and real, officials say the Taliban quickly broadcasts exaggerated tolls, stoking public anger, while foreign military officers may take days to respond.

"We are definitely not winning the information war, and we have to reverse that," said Brig. Gen. Richard Blanchette, the chief spokesman for NATO forces here.

He said the Taliban uses such tactics as hiding in farm compounds, dressing dead fighters in civilian clothes and then denouncing foreign forces for bombing villagers. "They don't have to bother with the truth," Blanchette said.

Today's Taliban also has a much greater degree of formal organization. The old Taliban was disastrous at governing, and ministries were run by barefoot mullahs who scribbled orders on scraps of paper. The new Taliban structure has councils for each area of governance, appoints officials in controlled areas and confers swift justice for crimes and disputes.

One Afghan journalist said he recently visited the capital of Logar province, less than an hour's drive south of Kabul, where the Taliban now wields enormous power. He said a man had walked into a Logar radio station and politely introduced himself to the astonished manager as the new provincial spokesman for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

According to Mojda and others, the Taliban is still led by Mohammad Omar, a village cleric who headed the 1996-2001 administration and has been a fugitive since its overthrow. Some former leaders hold senior posts in the new movement, although many have been killed. The rank-and-file fighters are a mix of old members and new recruits.

Their statements focus on ridding Afghanistan of foreign occupiers and incompetent leaders. Although they use Islam to motivate followers, they regularly violate what people here consider to be basic Islamic tenets against such things as the murder of women and trafficking in opium.

Their predecessors used harsh punishments to instill law and order but were often pious Muslims. This year, the insurgents have killed teachers, mayors, policemen, truck drivers, doctors, female aid workers and Muslim clerics.

"These people claim to be Muslims, but they are nothing more than terrorists," said Abdul Razzak Qureshi, police chief of Paghman, a district in the mountains west of Kabul. Last week he showed a visiting journalist a trove of land mines and explosive devices that his officers had found planted beside roads and in culverts in the past several months.

One such device was detonated last week under a vehicle carrying Abdullah Wardak, the governor of Logar province, near his home in Paghman. He died instantly, along with two bodyguards and a driver.

In separate interviews, residents of Paghman, a pretty area in the hills with wildflowers, birches and breezy picnic spots, said they had unhappy memories of Taliban rule and hoped it would not return. So far, the insurgents have not emerged in daylight there, but Razzak, the police chief, said he was unsure how long his force of 147 officers could continue to protect a sprawling district of 186 villages that borders Taliban-controlled Wardak.

"The Taliban used to have nothing, but now they have more modern weapons than we do," he said. "Our people feel safe for now, but just over the border they operate freely and have their own checkpoints. If they decide to come here one day, there is nothing I can do to stop them."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/19/AR2008091903980.html>

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