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Washington Post
March 18, 2004
Pg. 28

U.S., Iran Are Urged To Talk Over Nuclear Plans

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

The United Nations' top nuclear official appealed to President Bush yesterday to begin new talks with Iran as a step toward resolving the controversy over the Islamic nation's aggressive pursuit of nuclear power.

Mohamed ElBaradei, director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, also urged the administration to support a global freeze on the production of fissile material such as enriched uranium and plutonium. The discovery two years ago of a massive uranium enrichment plant south of Tehran triggered the current diplomatic showdown over Iran's nuclear program.

"This is a different ballgame, and we have to change the rules," ElBaradei told reporters after 45 minutes of meetings with Bush and national security adviser Condoleezza Rice.

ElBaradei said Iran appears to have resumed cooperation with the U.N. nuclear watchdog, four days after Iranian leaders barred a team of IAEA inspectors from entering the country. But he suggested that direct talks with the United States may be key to ending the crisis.

"The best way to resolve these problems is through dialogue," ElBaradei said. Asked whether he had relayed a private message to Bush from the Iranians, ElBaradei declined to comment.

The meeting between Bush and ElBaradei came amid reports of a split within the administration over whether to pursue negotiations with Iran, a country that Bush has labeled part of an "axis of evil."

Yesterday, the Financial Times of London reported that Iran offered 10 months ago to hold secret talks on normalizing relations with the United States. The talks reportedly would address U.S. concerns over Iran's nuclear program as well as the Islamic republic's support of terrorist groups.

The Bush administration did not respond publicly to the call for dialogue. Before the meeting with ElBaradei, White House spokesman Scott McClellan said the administration had "not received any official proposals" from Iran, and he played down the usefulness of new talks in resolving the conflict.

"There are obviously a number of concerns we have with regard to Iran [that] they need to address," McClellan said. "We've always said in the past that there are established channels of communication when we have issues of mutual concern to address."

A State Department spokesman yesterday expressed satisfaction with the IAEA's recent moves to pressure Iran into fully disclosing past nuclear activities. On Saturday, the agency's governing board approved a resolution that sharply criticized Iran for failing to acknowledge efforts to acquire advanced centrifuge machines used to enrich uranium.

"We shared the view that the best way to deal with that [Iran's] program is through the IAEA," spokesman J. Adam Ereli said.

Earlier in the day, ElBaradei told a congressional panel that it is too early to tell if Iran's nuclear program was entirely peaceful, as its government contends. Asked if Iran had begun work on nuclear weapons, the IAEA chief said: "The jury is still out."

"We have not yet seen that, but I am not yet excluding that possibility," ElBaradei told the House International Relations Committee's subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia.

During his White House talks, ElBaradei asked the Bush administration to back several of his initiatives to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, including the freeze on the production of fissile material. He also asked for U.S. help in securing supplies of weapons-grade uranium and plutonium that are used as fuel in scores of nuclear research reactors around the world. Such fuels, if obtained by terrorists, could easily be used in making a nuclear bomb.

"We need to have a good plan in place to clean up nuclear materials that are all over the place," ElBaradei said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A2936-2004Mar17.html>

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Washington Post

Nuclear Security Training Lacking

Plants Eliminated or Reduced Drills Designed to Repel Attacks, U.S. Says

Associated Press

Thursday, March 18, 2004; Page A29

Nuclear weapons plants have eliminated or reduced training for guards responsible for repelling terrorist attacks, leaving the government unable to guarantee the plants can be adequately defended, the Energy Department's internal watchdog said.

One plant has reduced training hours by 40 percent, and some plants conduct tactical training only in classrooms, according to a report from the department's inspector general.

Some contractors fear that injuries among guards during training exercises could reduce bonus payments from the government, the report said. Guards typically receive 320 hours of training.

Only one of 10 plants surveyed, Hanford, Wash., trains guards in the basic use of a shotgun, according to the report.

None of the plants teaches guards how to rappel down buildings or cliffs because of concerns that guards might be injured. The report noted that one guard died rappelling in 1995.

"Inconsistent training methods may increase the risk that the department's protective forces will not be able to safely respond to security incidents or will use excessive levels of force," said the report prepared by Inspector General Gregory H. Friedman's office and released Tuesday.

The National Nuclear Security Administration, which protects nuclear plants, acknowledged in a letter responding to the inspector general that training for guards has suffered because of overtime demands at weapons plants. It promised to review training to make sure it is adequate.

The criticisms were the latest leveled against the government's ability to protect nuclear facilities, long considered prime targets for espionage and terrorist attacks.

The inspector general complained in January that security guards who repelled four simulated terrorist attacks at the Y-12 weapons plant in Tennessee had been tipped in advance. The plant processes parts for nuclear weapons and maintains vast supplies of bomb-grade uranium.

That earlier report also determined that at least two guards defending the mock attacks had been allowed to look at computer simulations a day before the attacks.

The newest report said some of the plants are not adequately training guards how to use handcuffs, fight hand-to-hand or defend against terrorists in vehicles.

"Defense tactics training should be as realistic as possible," the report said. "Anything less may rob the trainee of the exposure to the levels of force, panic, and confusion that are usually present during an actual attack and increase the possibility of an inappropriate response in high stress situations."

At some weapons plants, for example, instructors used wooden mock-ups or removed windshields from the vehicles of mock terrorists for safety. But experts said that prevents guards from learning how glass affects gunfire or the visibility of a target inside.

The report said all 10 weapons plants surveyed have reduced training in at least two important areas. The plants were the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California; the Nevada Test Site near Nellis Air Force Base; the Oak Ridge Complex in Tennessee; the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site near Denver; the Hanford site; Sandia National Laboratories in California; the Pantex Plant in Amarillo, Tex.; the Savannah River Site in South Carolina; the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico; and the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A2869-2004Mar17.html>

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International Herald Tribune

March 18, 2004

Al Qaeda Is Said To Plan To Bomb City By Sea

By Associated Press

SINGAPORE - Al Qaeda is possibly planning an unprecedented maritime attack, hitting targets on land with ships carrying chemical, biological or dirty bomb weapons, a defense analyst said Wednesday.

The terrorist network could easily exploit weaknesses in shipping companies' crew selection procedures by planting sleeper agents on vessels to eventually seize them, said Michael Richardson, a senior researcher at Singapore's Institute of Southeast Asian Studies who writes extensively on Asian security issues.

"The Al Qaeda network has serious maritime terrorism plans," Richardson told diplomats, academics and defense officials at the institute.

Singapore's coordinating security minister, Tony Tan, has warned repeatedly since November that there is a "very serious" risk of terrorists' using ships to attack the city-state.

Such an attack could have come sooner if it was not so difficult to procure a nuclear device and if Al Qaeda's operations chief, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, and its head of naval operations, Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, had not been arrested, Richardson said.

"Sooner or later, Al Qaeda or one of its affiliates will make and detonate a radiological bomb, whether it's in a ship or a shipping container," he said.

"If you look at how relatively easy it is to get the materials, put them together and make them go bang, and look at the motivation, terrorism is going to get bigger and it's going to get worse," he added. A prime target would be Singapore - or any of the world's 40 largest port cities - or key international shipping straits and canals, Richardson said. Al Qaeda operatives could easily get jobs on ships by buying fake seafarer credentials, which are widely available, he said.

But Al Qaeda's past pattern of disciplined, coordinated attacks makes it unlikely that the network will risk hijacking a ship, or seeking help from pirates outside its circle of zealots, he said.

The network has already demonstrated its willingness to attack sea targets, with suicide attacks on the U.S. destroyer Cole in 2000 and the French oil tanker Limburg in 2002, Richardson said. In both attacks, suicide bombers detonated small explosive-laden boats next to vessels off the coast of Yemen.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/510817.html>

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Not Ready For The Next Attack

By John D. Solomon

The bombing in Madrid last week should be a wake-up call to the American people to begin focusing on their own civil defense readiness. Recent surveys have shown that while an overwhelming majority of Americans expect terrorists to attack the United States in the near future, only about two in 10 have done anything to prepare for such an occurrence.

That disparity underscores the failure of the Bush administration's civil defense readiness campaign and raises questions about how well the public would react in the event of another terrorist attack.

Preparedness efforts by the Department of Homeland Security have centered on its year-old Ready.gov Web site and accompanying public service announcements. The site provides a great deal of helpful information on the wide range of possible terror threats. It recommends some basic things -- having supplies, equipment and plans -- that every American should do. Yet, as the polls indicate, those important instructions are being almost entirely ignored. Even in New York City, the primary site of the Sept. 11 attacks, there's a trifurcated state of readiness. Some people have full evacuation plans and medicine kits, some have a week's worth of water and batteries in the closet, and the large majority haven't done anything.

That's because the government -- at the national and local levels -- has not provided enough guidance. President Bush has not spoken once to the public about civil defense. Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge has kept a low profile on public readiness matters ever since the ill-fated -- and much-parodied -- "duct tape" press conference when Ready.gov was launched. Few state and local elected officials have taken leadership roles.

The anemic preparedness numbers aren't surprising in light of the government's laissez-faire approach. Did officials think they could just put out information on such a sensitive and complex topic without much fanfare or any follow-up and then count on citizens to prepare themselves? It has given Americans the false idea that something that should be viewed as a societal responsibility is an a la carte option.

It's time for the government to start putting civil defense front and center. One high-profile way to jump-start the readiness efforts would be to begin limited civil defense drills for the public. This month the United States and Britain announced plans for a joint exercise to test the response of emergency personnel to a terrorist attack. Last May U.S. officials undertook large-scale bioterrorism drills in Seattle and Chicago to determine the ability of local, state and federal authorities to handle terrorist attacks. But they were solely for first responders. The public has not been included, and there are no plans to include it. That's a missed opportunity.

Mock drills would bring preparedness to the center of national consciousness and engage Americans in their nation's defense. Almost every school and business conducts regular fire drills. While perfunctory, they at least provide some awareness of what needs to be done when and if something happens. And ultimately, is there any downside to being more prepared?

Obviously, some emergency preparations have to be secret, but people should have at least an idea of what they'll need to do when and if an attack occurs. And while it's more important that emergency responders be well rehearsed, relief efforts will be only as strong as the weakest links.

There could be some government concern about panicking the public with scary scenarios. But most experts say that generally, more knowledge is better in reducing anxiety.

Readying the public for terrorism won't be easy. The government has to deal with a skeptical citizenry, some of whom equate civil defense with schoolchildren hiding from Russian ICBMs under their desks. Changing that mindset requires well-organized, coherent and dramatic action. The Homeland Security Department has many pressing responsibilities, but it needs to do far better on civil defense.

Just before the Madrid bombing, CIA Director George Tenet again warned Congress about the possibility of more "spectacular attacks" against the United States. Before it's too late, the government should be drilling the public to prepare for them.

The author, a New York-based journalist, writes frequently on civil defense issues.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A3769-2004Mar18.html>

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Musharraf Cites Nuclear Dealings

Powell Told of Government Involvement

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, March 18 -- Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said Thursday he had received new information from Pakistan's president about the Pakistani government's dealings with Abdul Qadeer Khan, who admitted last month he had sold nuclear designs and components to other countries.

But Powell, who came here saying he would seek details on the links between the disgraced Khan's technology smuggling ring and Pakistani officials, said he would wait to analyze the information in Washington before providing details. "What I want to do is reflect on what he said to me and discuss it with some of my other colleagues back in Washington before I comment on the specifics of it," Powell told reporters traveling with him.

Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the president, pardoned Khan last month after Khan acknowledged a broad scheme that netted him tens of millions of dollars and spread nuclear technology to Libya, North Korea and Iran. But questions have persisted about how Khan's network could operate without the knowledge or participation of senior Pakistani military, intelligence and other government officials. "No responsible government of Pakistan should have tolerated such a thing, and I hope they did not," Powell said, adding, "We got to get all the facts."

The Bush administration has dealt carefully with the matter of Pakistani government links to the Khan network because Pakistan is considered crucial to the war on terror. Reflecting that caution, Powell announced after meeting with the foreign minister here that the administration would grant Pakistan the coveted status of "major non-NATO ally," making it easier for the country to procure military equipment. The announcement came as Pakistani troops waged a bloody battle in a remote tribal area against al Qaeda and Taliban fighters.

Powell rejected any link between the awarding of Pakistan's new status and the Khan investigation. Naming Pakistan a major non-NATO ally is "part of a normal relationship with countries we have military-to-military relations with, and we think it is a sensible thing to do," Powell said. "It is not a reward for A.Q. Khan. It's part of a continuing relationship."

The benefits of the designation for Pakistan are unclear. Easier procurement of surplus military equipment might help Pakistan fight al Qaeda, but the designation does not confer the same mutual defense and security guarantees that members of NATO receive, and Powell acknowledged it can be largely symbolic. In recent months, the Bush administration has awarded the title to Kuwait and Thailand, joining 10 other nations.

India, Pakistan's South Asia nuclear rival, does not have this status, a fact that Pakistani officials were eager to note. But the Bush administration gave India its own plum this year -- an agreement to help India with its nuclear energy and space technology in return for a promise to use the aid for peaceful purposes and to help block the spread of dangerous weapons.

But Pakistan's Islamic opposition heavily criticized the U.S. offer, saying it would make Pakistan a client of the United States.

"I will be very unhappy if Pakistan is inching towards this alliance with the U.S.," Khurshid Ahmad, a leader of the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami party, told the Agence France-Presse news service.

"This is neither an honor, nor a step towards global security. We have to avoid becoming a mercenary and a client state," Ahmad said, adding it was not a reward but "a new trap."

The fierce fighting in the tribal region, which Pakistani officials said had killed 15 soldiers and 24 militants, has also stirred criticism in Pakistan. The newspaper Daily Times carried an editorial cartoon today showing Powell emerging from his plane and using the coffins of the dead as his steps.

Powell, a retired four-star Army general, also said he and Musharraf had a detailed "soldier-to-soldier" discussion of the fighting. Musharraf seized power in 1999 in a bloodless military coup.

Khan, who ran Pakistan's main nuclear weapons plant for many years and is known as the creator of the country's nuclear bomb, said last month that he had passed nuclear secrets without government authorization. The Pakistani government launched an investigation of Khan last year after receiving evidence from the United States.

But Powell said he believes Musharraf -- who was Army chief of staff and then president during the height of Khan's dealings -- is "serious about this." He noted that Khan is revered in Pakistan and "they are all taken aback by the fact" Khan took the knowledge "he had developed in helping his own nation to help nations that shouldn't have been helped."

After his talks in Islamabad, Powell flew to Kuwait City. He plans several days of talks with Kuwaiti and Saudi officials on Iraq, Middle East peace and the administration's push for democracy in the Arab world.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A6146-2004Mar18.html>

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USA Today

Posted 3/19/2004 8:22 AM

North Korea threatens to increase nuclear deterrent

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea on Friday threatened to boost its nuclear arsenal in "quality and quantity" if the United States continues its "increased military threat."

A North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises scheduled to start Sunday show the United States is preparing to attack the North and is not serious about pursuing a peaceful solution to the nuclear standoff.

"The increased military threat the U.S. poses to (North Korea), whiling away time with lip-service to 'dialogue,' will only compel it to increase its nuclear deterrent force both in quality and quantity," North Korea's official KCNA news agency quoted the ministry spokesman as saying.

"No one can take issue with this measure for self-defense," he said.

The United States and South Korea are scheduled to kick off annual joint military exercises on Sunday, despite political uncertainty in South Korea following last week's impeachment of President Roh Moo-hyun.

"Such serious military moves of the U.S. forces in South Korea suggest that the day of the outbreak of a war is drawing near hour by hour in Korea," KCNA said.

Washington and Seoul have said the annual drills are defense exercises. North Korea has denounced previous exercises as preparations by the United States to invade the North.

A second round of six-nation talks — attended by the United States, the two Koreas, China, Russia and Japan — ended in Beijing last month without much progress. But the participants agreed to try meeting again before July. North Korea has said it has finished reprocessing about 8,000 nuclear fuel rods, which experts say could be used to produce several nuclear bombs in addition to the one or two the North is believed to already have. Delays in resolving a stalemate over the North's nuclear weapons program may give it more time to increase its arsenal.

"The true aim sought by the U.S. is not to preserve peace on the Korean Peninsula but to stifle (North Korea) by force," the spokesman said. "It does not seek a negotiated settlement of the issue but tries to meet its ulterior aim while wasting time behind the scene of 'dialogue.'"

"It is clear to everyone that it is impossible to sit face to face with a party carrying a dagger in its belt and have productive talks with it in good faith for the solution of the issue," he added.

Earlier Friday, North Korea said the upcoming military maneuvers increased the danger of war on the Korean Peninsula and could derail efforts to hold a new round of six-nation talks on ending the nuclear stalemate.

In a flurry of official dispatches condemning the United States, the isolated communist nation said it needed a strong defense to guard against a U.S. attack, and termed the U.S. government the "world's biggest gangster."

Such pronouncements are not uncommon from North Korea's official media, but tend to flare at times of tension.

In a separate KCNA dispatch marking the March 20 anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, North Korea said having a strong military was the only way to avoid a similar fate.

"The Iraqi war clearly proved that the U.N. Charter and international laws cannot play any role in deterring the arbitrary and high-handed practices of the U.S.," KCNA said.

The United States repeatedly has said it has no intention of invading North Korea and has expressed willingness to put that in writing if North Korea starts to dismantle its nuclear programs in a complete and verifiable way.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2004-03-19-koreas-nuclear_x.htm

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New York Times

Addressing the Unthinkable, U.S. Revives Study of Fallout

By WILLIAM J. BROAD

Published: March 19, 2004

To cope with the possibility that terrorists might someday detonate a nuclear bomb on American soil, the federal government is reviving a scientific art that was lost after the cold war: fallout analysis.

The goal, officials and weapons experts both inside and outside the government say, is to figure out quickly who exploded such a bomb and where the nuclear material came from. That would clarify the options for striking back. Officials also hope that if terrorists know a bomb can be traced, they will be less likely to try to use one.

In a secretive effort that began five years ago but whose outlines are just now becoming known, the government's network of weapons laboratories is hiring new experts, calling in old-timers, dusting off data and holding drills to sharpen its ability to do what is euphemistically known as nuclear attribution or post-event forensics.

It is also building robots that would go into an affected area and take radioactive samples, as well as field stations that would dilute dangerous material for safe shipment to national laboratories.

"Certainly, there's a frightening aspect in all of this," said Charles B. Richardson, the project leader for nuclear identification research at the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque. "But we're putting all these things together with the hope that they'll never have to be used."

Most experts say the risk of a terrorist nuclear attack is low but no longer unthinkable, given the spread of material and know-how around the globe.

Dr. Jay C. Davis, a nuclear scientist who in 1999 helped found the Pentagon's part of the governmentwide effort, said the precautions would "pay huge dividends after the event, both in terms of the ability to identify the bad actor and in terms of establishing public trust."

In a nuclear crisis, Dr. Davis added, the identification effort would be vital in "dealing with the desire for instant gratification through vengeance."

Vice President Dick Cheney was briefed on the program last fall, Dr. Davis said. The National Security Council coordinates the work among a dozen or so federal agencies.

The basic science relies on faint clues — tiny bits of radioactive fallout, often invisible to the eye, that under intense scrutiny can reveal distinctive signatures. Such wisps of evidence can help identify an exploded bomb's type and characteristics, including its country of origin.

Solving the nuclear whodunit could take much more information, including hard-won law enforcement clues and good intelligence on foreign nuclear arms and terrorist groups. For that reason, several federal agencies are involved in the program, among them the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The program addresses true nuclear weapons as well as so-called dirty bombs, ordinary explosives that spew radioactive debris.

"It's a very hard job," said William Happer, a physicist at Princeton who led a panel that evaluated the identification work.

Mr. Happer said he was worried that a rush for retribution after a nuclear attack might cut short the time needed for careful analysis. "If we lose a city," he said, "we might not wait around that long."

The effort to fingerprint domestic nuclear blasts is part of a larger federal project to strengthen the nation's overall defenses against unconventional terrorist threats. Mostly, the goal is prevention. For instance, the government recently sent teams of scientists with hidden radiation detectors to check major American cities for signs that terrorists might be preparing to detonate radiological bombs.

In contrast, the identification program seeks to increase the government's knowledge and options should prevention fail. "We're trying to resurrect some of our capability," said Reid Worlton, a retired nuclear scientist from the Los Alamos weapons laboratory in New Mexico who has been called in to aid the fallout endeavor. "It sort of died. They're not doing radiochemistry on nuclear tests anymore, so it's hard to keep these people around."

The effort draws on work that began at the dawn of the atomic era. Scientists working on the Manhattan Project built an array of devices to monitor nuclear blasts in the New Mexico desert in July 1945 and at Hiroshima and Nagasaki a month later. The experience helped scientists learn what to look for.

The first hunt zeroed in on the Soviet Union. In the late 1940's, military weather planes used paper filters to gather dust particles around the periphery of Russia, and scientists in the United States who analyzed the data at first sounded dozens of false alarms, said Jeffrey T. Richelson, an intelligence expert in Washington.

Then, on Sept. 3, 1949, a weather plane flying from Japan to Alaska picked up a slew of atomic particles. "That was the real thing," Mr. Richelson said. Twenty days later, President Harry S. Truman announced that the Soviets had exploded their first nuclear device.

The ranks of fallout investigators swelled during the cold war as foreign nations conducted hundreds of atmospheric nuclear tests. By all accounts, the sleuths made many important discoveries about the nature and design of foreign nuclear arms.

In time, the ranks dwindled as more and more nations decided to move their test explosions underground, eliminating fallout. The last nuclear blast to pummel the earth's atmosphere was in 1980, and the last known underground test, conducted by Pakistan, was in 1998.

As the terrorist threat rose in the 1990's, the government began to consider the quandary that would arise if a nuclear weapon exploded on American soil. In 1999, Dr. Davis, then head of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency at the Pentagon, began an effort to address the identification problem by financing research at the nation's weapons laboratories, many of them run by the Energy Department.

The first money came in late 2000, Dr. Davis said, and the attacks of September 2001 "made it clear that a very organized event on a large scale was credible." That perception, he said, helped the effort expand.

The secretive work won rare public praise in a June 2002 report ("Making the Nation Safer") from the National Research Council of the National Academies, the country's leading scientific advisory group. Having the ability to find out who launched a domestic nuclear strike, the report said, could deter attackers and bolster threats of

retaliation. The report urged that the program go into operation "as quickly as practical" and that the government publicly declare its existence.

Since then, weapons laboratories and other federal agencies have worked hard on the problem. "They're making progress but they've got a ways to go," said Mr. Worlton, the retired Los Alamos scientist.

In a drill this year, dozens of federal experts in fallout analysis met at the Sandia laboratories in Albuquerque to study a simulated terrorist nuclear blast. Mr. Worlton said they were broken into teams and given radiological data from two old American nuclear tests, whose identities remained hidden, and were instructed to try to name them. Some teams succeeded, he said.

Mr. Richardson of Sandia said the laboratory was developing a land robot that could roll up to 10 miles to sample fallout and return it to human operators for analysis. It could also radio back some results if it became stuck. Mr. Richardson said the robots, now in development, are to be ready in a couple of years.

Experts say a new aircraft for atmospheric sampling of nuclear fallout is also in development. The Air Force currently has one, the WC-135W Constant Phoenix, for such work. It was first deployed in 1965.

Weapons experts say getting samples fast is important because some radioactive debris can decay rapidly. If captured quickly, they can shed light on a weapon's design.

One way of trying to identify a bomb's origin positively, several experts say, is to match debris signatures with libraries of classified data about nuclear arms around the world, including old fallout signatures and more direct intelligence about bomb types, characteristics and construction materials.

"If you're talking about a stolen device, you might try to do that," Mr. Richardson said. "But if it's improvised, that's less likely to work. It might not look like things you've seen before."

A further complication is that even knowing who made a bomb may say little about who detonated it. In a 1991 Tom Clancy novel, "The Sum of All Fears," Islamic terrorists find and rebuild an Israeli nuclear weapon and set it off at the Super Bowl.

Federal experts say complex threat scenarios (for instance, an American warhead being stolen and detonated in an American city) mean that many types of intelligence might be needed for successful identification. Over all, it is unclear how much money the government is spending on the effort.

Private experts offered suggestions for improvement. Dr. Happer of Princeton, who heads a university board that helps oversee campus research, said the program might be cooperating too little with nuclear allies. "It's to our advantage," he said, "for all of us to share."

Dr. Davis, the former head of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, made several policy recommendations last April in an article for The Journal of Homeland Security. He said the F.B.I. should lead the program, presidentially appointed overseers should guide it, goals should be set for how long analyses should take and legal issues of prosecution should be examined.

In an interview, Dr. Davis said his suggestions had made little headway, partly because of the topic's grisly nature. "This is an ugly subject because your best effort is going to be barely adequate," he said. "That's not the kind of phrase people like to hear."

Mr. Richardson of Sandia said that the attribution effort had made good technical progress and had already some ability to identify an attacker.

"We're hoping for deterrence," he said. "We don't want anybody to think they can get away with it."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/19/national/19NUKE.html?th>

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Al Qaeda: We Bought Nuke Cases

By Tracy Connor, Daily News Staff Writer

New York Daily News

March 22, 2004

Osama Bin Laden's top henchman bragged to a journalist that Al Qaeda operatives bought "briefcase" nukes on the black market, it was reported yesterday.

Ayman Al-Zawahiri laughed as he described how easy it was for the terror network to obtain a portable nuclear device - a nightmare scenario for the United States.

"If you have \$30 million, go to the black market in central Asia, contact any disgruntled Soviet scientist, and a lot of smart briefcase bombs are available," he was quoted as saying.

"They have contacted us. We sent our people to Moscow, to Tashkent, to other central Asian states, and they negotiated. And we purchased some suitcase bombs."

Al-Zawahiri made the chilling boast in an undated interview with Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir, who claims to be Bin Laden's authorized biographer.

Mir recounted the Egyptian's comments in an interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corp. set to air today. U.S. intelligence officials say they are well aware of Bin Laden's lust for nukes and his efforts to buy them on the black market. But they point out there's no concrete evidence that he has succeeded.

Although Bin Laden has claimed in the past that Al Qaeda has apocalyptic weapons, Al-Zawahiri is the first to offer any specifics.

He did not say when the devices were allegedly bought or how many Al Qaeda has, but if his boast of a ready-made bomb is true it would be a frightful development.

A report released by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last year detailed how difficult it is to stop a terrorist who builds or buys a bomb from smuggling it onto U.S. soil.

In a 1999 interview, Bin Laden described his twisted version of the Manhattan Project as "a religious duty."

Two years later, just weeks after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, Bin Laden told Mir he had nuclear arms and was ready to use them against the U.S.

"I wish to declare that if America used chemical or nuclear weapons against us, then we may reply with chemical and nuclear weapons," he said then.

"We have the weapons as a deterrent."

With News Wire Services

<http://www.nydailynews.com/front/story/176079p-153307c.html>

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Time

March 29, 2004

How We Got Homeland Security Wrong

The fortification of Wyoming, and other strange tales from the new front line

By Amanda Ripley, Cheyenne

When researcher Karen Clark developed the first probability-based model for measuring the threat of natural disasters in the U.S. in 1987, almost no one cared. Clark, then 30, started her own company in Boston and used tens of thousands of data points—from the wind speeds of hurricanes to the lengths of fault lines—to help insurance firms estimate how often a disaster might strike and how much harm it might do. Then, in 1992, Hurricane Andrew struck, wreaking more havoc than anyone—except Clark and her small team at AIR Worldwide Corp.—had ever imagined possible. As the toll climbed past \$15 billion, AIR's phones began ringing.

Today probabilistic modeling technology is so well accepted that after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, AIR's clients immediately called for a new model that would capture the risks of terrorism. The model, completed in 2002, assesses the likelihood and cost, in human life and dollars, of different kinds of attacks in every part of the country. It's not perfect, but it's smart. "The risk of terrorism is everywhere," says Clark. "The question is, How much risk?" This time the insurance industry quickly accepted modeling as the basis for figuring out how much terrorism coverage should cost.

International terrorism, as most experts will tell you, is not as unpredictable as it feels. Terrorists follow patterns. And while we can't read the minds of zealots, we can get a good idea of what kind of damage they could do in any given location. We can estimate the cost of an attack on a port in Los Angeles vs. an attack on a port in Prince William Sound. We can calculate where a nuclear blast of a given force would kill 500,000 people as opposed to 50,000. These are the logical estimates that insurers and investment banks are seeking as they try to quantify the risk they face.

But while all this strategic thinking is going on in the private sector, the government has responded to terrorism in a less rational way. Since the Sept. 11 attacks, about \$13.1 billion has surged into state coffers from the Federal Government—sorely needed money that has gone for police, fire and emergency services to help finance equipment and training to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks.

That is a 990% increase over the \$1.2 billion spent by the Federal Government for similar programs in the preceding three years. But the vast majority of the \$13.1 billion was distributed with no regard for the threats, vulnerabilities and potential consequences faced by each region. Of the top 10 states and districts receiving the most money per capita last year, only the District of Columbia also appeared on a list of the top 10 most at-risk places, as calculated by AIR for TIME. In fact, funding appears to be almost inversely proportional to risk. If all the federal homeland-security grants from last year are added together, Wyoming received \$61 a person while California got just \$14, according to data gathered at TIME's request by the Public Policy Institute of California, an independent, nonprofit research organization. Alaska received an impressive \$58 a resident, while New York got less than \$25. On and on goes the upside-down math of the new homeland-security funding.

How all this happened—and the bitter battle to rationalize the system—shows how far America has yet to go in establishing something called homeland security. With no clear direction from the feds, state officials have been engaged in a perverse competition for antiterrorism dollars. The Bush Administration recently proposed a far more risk-based approach for 2005 funding, but rural-state Senators are balking now that they have had three years to get accustomed to their cash. In some ways, it is a familiar story: of state officials understandably guarding their piece of the pie, of rural localities getting disproportionate help from the government.

But this money is not for roads; it is the first demonstration of how America will protect its citizens in a new kind of war. Boggled down in emotion and opportunism, the debate is leading to dangerous gaps in the preparedness of our most vulnerable communities. Says Stephen E. Flynn, a former U.S. Coast Guard commander and director of a homeland-security task force chaired by Gary Hart and Warren Rudman: "At the end of the day, blowing off New York and L.A. so that you can make sure Wyoming is safe just makes no sense."

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Why didn't risk figure into the formula written after 9/11 to bolster homeland security? In facing al-Qaeda, we knew we were dealing with an organization that sought mass casualties and headlines. In the confused days after 9/11, when Capitol Hill offices were closed after several were contaminated by letters containing anthrax, a small group of House and Senate leaders got together with Bush Administration staff members in a corner of the Capitol to write the homeland-security funding portion of the USA Patriot Act—a massive and sweeping bill that was propelled into law just six weeks after Sept. 11. Under the direction of Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, then chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, they decided to adopt a formula that had been used in years past for distributing terrorism-preparedness funds, a formula that had never been written into law before and that was designed for a sum of money that was incomparably smaller. This unusual formula mandated that each state receive a minimum of three-quarters of 1% of the total pot of money, with smaller shares going to territories like Puerto Rico. That meant that 40% of the funds had to be divided up equally among the states, regardless of size or population.

There wasn't much debate about the decision, says a Democratic Senate aide who was involved in the negotiation. "Frankly, it wasn't as high a priority as FBI wiretaps and some of the other things being debated." The formula first appeared in the Patriot Act bill on Oct. 23. One day later, it was passed by the House. "Nobody even noticed it until five months later," remembers a House aide.

But Congress alone isn't to blame for the skewed funding. The Executive Branch was left with exceptional leeway to spend the remaining 60% of the funds any which way—including according to risk. But first in 2002 and then again in 2003 and 2004, under the newly created Department of Homeland Security, the Executive Branch just split the money according to each state's population.

THE LITTLE VS. THE BIG

Small-state politicians argue that every state, no matter how underpopulated, needs a boost of money to achieve a minimal level of security after Sept. 11. "Whether it's a state of half a million or 4 million, you've got to do certain basic things," Senator Leahy told Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge during a February hearing. Says Doug Friez, the top homeland-security official in North Dakota (pop. 642,200), which received \$52 a person in federal funds last year, the fourth highest per-capita allocation by state: "We realize North Dakota may not be first on Osama bin Laden's list. But we have some significant infrastructure, we have big buildings you can put a lot of people in at one time, we have the border. We have all the things that can make a terrorist stay." New Hampshire, the No. 9 state recipient of funds per capita, is not easily outdone. "Yes, New York City is more target rich," says Bruce Cheney, director of New Hampshire's bureau of emergency management. "But there's been a lot of added security there. If you're a terrorist, you may say, Why waste your time in New York City when you can make a hell of a mess in Maryland or Delaware or, God forbid, Portsmouth, New Hampshire?" Says Flynn: "Everybody's become Tom Clancy."

It would be ideal if every American town had a basic level of readiness, but the total pot of money is too small, says Tim Ransdell. He authored one of the few comprehensive assessments of homeland-security money on behalf of the Public Policy Institute of California. "Wyoming and South Dakota are important states, but it's a bit counterintuitive to say an individual in those states is manyfold more important than someone living in a state that has a border with a foreign nation, some of the nation's icons and almost half of the nation's containerized cargo." Says Al O'Leary of the New York City Patrolmen's Benevolent Association: "It goes against every fundamental precept of fighting crime. If you're having a robbery pattern in a particular community, you put detectives there. It's actually a no-brainer, but there's apparently no brain in Washington, D.C."

WYOMING: A CASE STUDY

To its credit, Wyoming, the least populous state in the U.S., does not feel like an ideal place for a terrorist attack. The 493,800 people who live here have a well-deserved affection for the state's yawning prairie land, framed by mountains and speckled with elk, antelope and mule deer. Wyoming's biggest city is Cheyenne, the capital, which is

still not serviced by jet liners. "It's very hard to hide in Wyoming," says Joe Moore, head of Wyoming's office of homeland security, on my first morning in town. "By the end of the day, everyone will know you're here." Like most rural states, Wyoming does not have a lot of money from property taxes to outfit its police, fire and emergency-services personnel. On top of that, the legislature has never been too generous. Until recently, it wasn't unusual for a fire station to hold a bake sale to raise money. Last summer, after a vintage World War II-era German bomber crashed into a building in Cheyenne, fire, ambulance and airport personnel could not talk to one another over their radios because they use different equipment. "We eventually ended up sending runners—like the Greeks," says Brian Grimm, communications officer for the state office of homeland security.

Now that Wyoming is the nation's No. 1 state recipient of homeland-security money per capita, Cheyenne has access to a mobile radio system that allows different agencies to talk to one another, thanks to \$52,000 in federal money. Federal money has also brought Wyoming four command vehicles; enough protective haz-mat suits for every police officer, sheriff's deputy and coroner in the state; and a robot named Miss Daisy that can help dismantle bombs and dispose of toxic chemicals. All these items will more than likely save lives. Haz-mat suits can be used for highway oil spills and police raids of crystal-meth labs. As the fire fighters will tell you, they should have had this equipment years ago. Mark Young, chief of the Casper fire department, says of federal authorities, "They've done us all a favor in this state. We're not gonna waste their money."

But a strange thing has happened since Sept. 11. Moore and some of his counterparts in other rural and small states have become convinced that their turf is just as threatened as Washington, New York and Chicago. One recent morning, Moore rattled off his doomsday scenarios: "We have two major interstate highways, and a significant proportion of the traffic is hazardous materials. We have two major railroads. Also, Wyoming has major mining, major electrical generating plants and coal-bed methane. Any one of those becomes a vulnerability for a terrorist." A former FBI agent, Moore works in an office decorated with a sketch of a longhorn sheep and a picture of the burning Twin Towers with the phrase CONSTANT VIGILANCE. When I ask him how he would prioritize limited federal money, he declines to answer. "We don't have crystal balls. We just believe that we're as important as anyone else." Over and over again, when I ask Wyoming officials about relative risk, they talk about relative worth. "Our citizens deserve the same kind of protection that they're afforded in other places in the country," says Lori Emmert, chief of police in Douglas (pop. 5,288), which has just received a new \$50,000 silver RV that serves as an emergency-operations command center, paid for with federal dollars. When I ask a group of 22 fire fighters in Casper whether they feel insulted by suggestions that they should get less homeland-security money, they all nod in agreement. "No one can say Casper can't be a terrorist target," says fire fighter Roy Buck. Taking the point further, Peter Beering, terrorism-preparedness chief in Indianapolis, Ind., writes in *First to Arrive*, a Harvard collection of essays on emergency preparedness, "In an era of satellite television ... attacking a rural target may actually instill more fear by delivering the message that no one is safe."

While that is a valid point, certain kinds of attacks would kill far fewer people in Casper than they would in Boston, owing to population density. And as it stands, the funding system is vulnerable to opportunism. While money for homeland security has grown, regular state and federal funding for police and fire operations continues to be cut as both state legislatures and the Bush Administration try to control growing budget deficits. In order to get the homeland-security money, states and localities must frame their needs in terms of terrorism. Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal defends his state's allotment but admits there is an incentive to see terrorism all around. "If you're trying to pick up an ambulance, you may know that ambulance will be used for natural disasters, but the paperwork will have to reflect terrorism. That's the problem. Money distorts objectivity."

WHERE THE PINCH IS FELT

New York City has been the target of six separate plots by Islamist terrorists in the past decade, police commissioner Ray Kelly told Congress at a hearing last fall. Yet budget cutbacks have left 5,000 fewer police in the city than there were in 1999. And Kelly has pulled 1,000 of the remaining cops off normal duty to work on terrorism prevention. "We're doing more with less in many ways. There's an opportunity cost," Kelly says. "People who were doing homicide are now doing terrorism." New York City estimates its counter-terrorism needs at \$900 million, he says. To date, it has been awarded about \$206 million. "We are grateful for the help, but it does not come anywhere near the needs that we have," Kelly testified. "Far and away, the people and city of New York are bearing the cost of defending the homeland in New York."

The same can be said of Los Angeles. Since 9/11, California has spent more than \$185 million in state funds on homeland security. Still, the L.A. County sheriff's department, which protects 10 million people, recently announced it may have to lay off 1,300 officers under Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed budget plan. Meanwhile, Wyoming is in a position to pay a greater share of the cost of protecting itself, yet refuses to do so. Thanks to high energy prices, Wyoming's plentiful oil and coal resources have helped produce a rare \$1.2 billion state surplus, the largest in the nation as a percentage of budget, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Recently, the state's office of homeland security asked the Wyoming legislature for \$532,000 over and above the \$105,000 it

already pays for Wyoming security chief Moore's salary. But the Governor and the office of homeland security removed the request before the measure came up for a vote because, says Governor Freudenthal, "they were going to kill the bill" otherwise. Since Sept. 11, California has spent roughly \$5 a person of its own money on homeland security; Wyoming has spent about \$1.

CAN THIS BE FIXED?

In early 2003, Congress announced a plan that sounded as if it might rectify the distortions in federal outlays—a new \$100 million grant for "high threat" urban areas only. In April, Secretary Ridge said seven cities had made the "high threat" list because of population density, the presence of important infrastructure and credible threats—which is to say, because of risk. The roster of cities—New York, Washington, Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, San Francisco and Houston—matched up perfectly with AIR's list of most at-risk cities. Democratic Congressman Anthony Weiner of New York, which received 25% of the new grant, says, "I was thinking, finally it seems we have a program based on merit, and clearly not based on politics—because a lot of these cities are not exactly Republican bastions."

Soon, however, the list of qualifying cities started mysteriously growing. Ridge's office and Congress had received calls from irate city officials who had been left out. In May the roster grew to 30 cities. But the pool of money also expanded by \$700 million, so it didn't seem like a problem. "We're thinking, O.K., we're getting 18% of the pot. That's reasonable," remembers an aide for a New York member of Congress. Then, for 2004 money, the Department of Homeland Security announced an even longer list of 50 cities, including Columbus, Ohio, and Fresno, Calif. And the dollars shrank to \$675 million. At that point, Weiner says, he lost heart. "We found a solution, and we're even screwing that up. We have some cities on there that don't even have minor-league baseball teams," he says. "Homeland security is just as much a pork barrel as every other program in Congress." New York City now receives 7% of the money.

Some Democrats from high-population states claim the funding scheme reflects the Bush Administration's political interests. "The political reality is that they don't have a constituency in big cities," says New York Senator Hillary Clinton. "They have been very resistant to doing the kind of national planning that would rationalize [the spending]. Nobody can deny we've made progress. But we've failed to take seriously the challenge of homeland security—because the Administration does not want to assume those responsibilities and does not want to spend the resources."

Homeland Security officials insist their approach makes sense, and point out that it has become more risk-based. "We're in the risk-management business here. We know the potential for a mass-casualty attack is not evenly divided," says Josh Filler, the department's director for state and local coordination. "We still believe everybody needs that baseline level of funding, but beyond that, we want to focus." Instead of implementing a risk-based model itself for the 60% of its budget that is discretionary, however, the department is waiting for Congress to do it. Explains a senior department official: "We wanted to engage with Congress before we messed around with that." Says an aide to a House Democrat: "Essentially, they just punted. It was outrageous."

The House Homeland Security Committee last week approved a bill to make the funding formula smarter. The measure, sponsored by chairman Christopher Cox, a Republican from California, would eliminate the state minimum from most grants and distribute much of the money according to risk. "It can't be true that fighting terror is entirely in the eye of the beholder. There has to be some discipline," he says. In its 2005 budget, the White House has also requested that more money be shifted over to the grants for "high risk" cities.

But the Senate is not going to make reform easy. On Feb. 10, Leahy, a member of the powerful Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee and whose home state, Vermont, gets \$54 per capita in federal funds, curtly reminded Ridge of the leverage that small states wield. "I have to say, I was really disappointed that the President's proposed budget ... drops the all-state minimum formula," he said. "That would affect all but, I think, one or two in this subcommittee. So it may be of more than passing interest." He then added, "I believe ... the Administration wants to shortchange rural states." Behind closed doors, the opposition is even more formidable. "World War III has broken out at meetings if we even talk about changing the formula," says a staff member in the Senate. Another Senate aide says the Cox bill is "going nowhere."

On the one-year anniversary this month of the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, Ridge addressed a Washington ballroom full of county executives. "The attacks of 9/11 required a whole new philosophy of how we secure the country," he said. So far, though, pork-barrel tradition is winning out in Washington. Change will require more people like Senator Judd Gregg, a Republican from New Hampshire, who has spoken out in favor of risk-based funding, even though it would almost certainly mean less money for his own state. "We know certain facts about the enemy. There are certain logical places where you're going to use weapons of mass destruction," he says, as if it's obvious. "This is a question of national security. Politics is irrelevant."

—With reporting by Mitch Frank/New York

<http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101040329/nhomeland.html>

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\$27 Million Sought For Nuclear Arms Study

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

At a time when President Bush has made nuclear nonproliferation a major goal, the administration is seeking \$27.6 million to continue a study next year of a possible new nuclear weapon and projecting that it could cost \$485 million over the next five years if it goes into development.

Linton Brooks, head of the National Nuclear Security Administration, which runs the nation's nuclear weapons program, told the strategic forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee on Thursday that the smaller sum would fund ongoing studies of how to adapt a current nuclear warhead to the task of targeting an enemy's hardened and deeply buried bunker.

The larger figure, he said, represented tentative funding needs for the program through 2009 -- "out-year projections only to preserve the president's option" if a decision were made to go ahead with the new weapon.

"No decisions will be made until the study is completed," Brooks told the panel, adding that Congress would still have to approve any presidential decision to produce a new weapon.

Although requests to study the need for such a weapon were triggered by allegations, still unproved, that former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein had buried illegal weapons and communications centers in deep bunkers, Brooks said the weapon is still needed to target "facilities that may be important to a future adversary."

Brooks also said he is seeking \$9 million, up from the current year's \$6 million, for studying advanced concepts for potential ideas for new weapons, "such as the utility of nuclear weapons against chemical and biological agents." Continued U.S. efforts to modernize thousands of warheads and develop new ones come not only as the Bush administration has made nonproliferation a goal, but also as international efforts are underway to get North Korea and Iran to back away from alleged new nuclear weapons programs.

The administration has said that its development of weapons does not affect what other nations do.

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, an advocacy group promoting disarmament measures, said yesterday that the continuing U.S. programs "give strength to the hard-liners in North Korea and Iran who want to keep their nuclear programs open."

The Defense Intelligence Agency warned Congress last month that U.S. allies, such as Pakistan and India, are continuing to modernize and expand their nuclear programs. In a little-noted portion of his prepared remarks to the Senate Armed Services Committee on Feb. 26, the DIA's director, Vice Adm. Lowell E. Jacoby, said, "Pakistan recently developed the capability to produce plutonium for potential weapons use." Pakistan's ability to produce weapons using enriched uranium has been well publicized.

Five years ago, the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), a Washington-based research group specializing in nuclear matters, announced that Pakistan was "nearing fruition" in its efforts to produce plutonium, but no U.S. government agency had confirmed publicly that the nation had done so. Yesterday, other sources within the U.S. intelligence community agreed that Pakistan had achieved the plutonium capability.

Jacoby also told the Senate committee last month that nuclear "weapons stockpiles in India and Pakistan are expected to grow" in coming years, an estimate confirmed by other government intelligence agencies.

"It is a big concern that we never talk about Pakistan moving ahead producing both enriched-uranium and plutonium bombs," said David Albright, a nuclear physicist who is president of ISIS. "The U.S. is not protesting the idea that both Pakistan and India are modernizing their stockpiles to make them more deliverable and in the process increasing the risk of accidental nuclear war," he added.

In addition, Israel has reportedly test-launched a cruise missile, with an approximate range of 900 miles, that could be carried on its new German-built submarines. "It is believed that such a cruise missile . . . can carry a nuclear warhead," Anthony H. Cordesman, an intelligence expert and former Pentagon official now with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said in a study of weapons in the Middle East released last week.

"There is no near- to mid-term prospect that Israel can give up nuclear weapons," Cordesman wrote, since the United States cannot "enforce restraint on friends without enforcing them on enemies."

Beyond the research programs, the nuclear security agency will next year continue programs to extend the lives of the W-87 warhead for intercontinental ballistic missiles, the W-76 Trident I submarine-launched missile, the B-61 tactical bomb and the W-80 submarine- and air-launched cruise missiles.

In the longer term, Brooks said, the administration is still discussing the future size of the U.S. nuclear stockpile.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A9359-2004Mar19.html>

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"Al-Zawahri Says Al Qaeda Has Nuke Bombs"

Arab Times

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"Al Qaeda's second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahri claims the militant Islamic organisation has bought briefcase nuclear bombs on the central Asian blackmarket, according to Osama bin Laden's biographer. Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir has told an Australian Broadcasting Corporation television programme, to be aired on Monday night, that when he interviewed Osama bin Laden and al-Zawahri in 2001 he asked whether al Qaeda had nuclear weapons. Mir said al-Zawahri laughed and said: 'Mr Mir, if you have US\$30 million, go to the black market in central Asia, contact any disgruntled Soviet scientist and a lot of dozens of smart briefcase bombs are available. 'They have contacted us, we sent our people to Moscow, to Tashkent, to other central Asian states and they negotiated and we purchased some suitcase bombs,' Mir quoted al-Zawahri on the ABC programme 'Enough Rope', recorded last Monday from Islamabad. The Egyptian al-Zawahri, a doctor, is regarded as the brains of al Qaeda and a key figure behind the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. Al Qaeda is suspected of having an interest in acquiring weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, biological or chemical, but no evidence of a programme was found in searches of its bases after the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan."

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