

Sent: Fri, 06 Feb 2004 14:56:48 -0500
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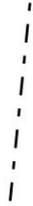
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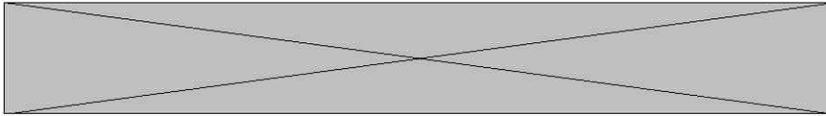
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Subject: In Case You Missed It: Wall St. Journal on WMD Proliferation
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February 6, 2004

—REVIEW & OUTLOOK

WMD Breakthrough

Pardon us for interrupting the Beltway brawl over Iraq intelligence, but has anyone else noticed the recent landmark progress against nuclear proliferation? The latest breakthrough came this week in Pakistan, where a scientist confessed on television to his nuclear weapons deals during the 1990s.

Intelligence debates are good political drama, though CIA Director George Tenet's speech yesterday is a persuasive rebuttal to the charges that U.S. intelligence was "politicized." The news in his remarks is that the U.S. had prewar information "from a source who had direct access to Saddam and his inner circle" that Iraq had WMD.

While Iraq lacked a nuclear bomb, the source said Saddam "was aggressively and covertly developing such a weapon" and had berated his Nuclear Weapons Committee for not getting one. That source and others may have overestimated the immediate nuclear threat, but we elect Presidents to make difficult security calls based on such imperfect information.

And in any case, let's recall why everyone cared about Iraq's WMD in the first place. The nightmare scenario, all too plausible after September 11, is that a dictator who trucks with terrorists will give them a nuclear weapon to explode on American soil. In recent weeks, the U.S. has made dramatic progress in busting up the global proliferation network that would make this possible, and much of the progress flows from President Bush's decision to disarm Saddam Hussein.

Abdul Qadeer Khan's TV tell-all on Wednesday established links among Islamabad, Tripoli, Tehran and Pyongyang, and showed how the fall of Baghdad damaged this network. Mr. Khan disclosed that he had traded nuclear know-how with North Korea, Iran and Libya in exchange for money and missile technology. His testimony will be invaluable in upsetting these channels of proliferation and putting further pressure on these would-be nuclear states.

These WMD dominoes began to fall last year at about the time Saddam's statue in Baghdad did. Libya's Moammar Gadhafi suddenly got serious about pledging to halt his burgeoning

weapons program. Gadhafi's decision followed an interception of nuclear centrifuge parts under Mr. Bush's Proliferation Security Initiative, a post-9/11 policy that seeks to disrupt weapons transfers on the oceans and in the air. The PSI has been derided by the same Clinton-era proliferation experts under whose noses Mr. Khan spread his technology.

A few weeks after Gadhafi cried uncle, Iran's mullahs invited the International Atomic Energy Agency to send scientists to inspect their nuclear facilities. Tehran needs to do much more, but its decision to at least pay lip service to IAEA inspections speaks volumes about how much the international security environment has changed.

U.N. inspectors who jetted to Tripoli and Tehran did not take long to find signs of Mr. Khan's handiwork. According to the Los Angeles Times, blueprints traced to him were found in both countries. In Iran a centrifuge program bore his imprint; in Libya, entire centrifuge assemblies may have been imported from Pakistan.

During his 26-year-career as the father of Pakistan's bomb, Mr. Khan also turned to North Korea, probably because its missiles are among the most advanced in the "axis of evil." U.S. intelligence believes Islamabad shared Mr. Khan's designs for the Pak-2 gas centrifuges. Pyongyang continues to resist global pressure to end its nuclear programs, but thanks to the falling WMD dominoes we know a lot more about them.

Regarding Pakistan, some in the West will want to criticize President Pervez Musharraf for pardoning Mr. Khan yesterday. No doubt the Pakistan military, of which General Musharraf is the ranking member, was aware of Mr. Khan's business, or at least turned a blind eye to it. The generals wanted a nuclear bomb to counter India's and they weren't going to let proliferation rules get in the way, especially in the 1990s when they were paying no price for it.

But the important point now is whether Mr. Musharraf cooperates with the U.S. in the future. The Pakistan President risked upsetting nationalists even by putting Mr. Khan under house arrest and making him confess on national TV. If he now lets U.S. officials debrief the scientist and track down his network, the intelligence windfall will count for much more than any punishment for Mr. Khan.

All of this anti-WMD progress contrasts dramatically with what took place during the late 1990s, when the U.S. was supposedly just as worried about nuclear proliferation. We now know that those were the years when Mr. Khan spread his nuclear wares, when Gadhafi gathered his centrifuges, when Iraq kicked out U.N. inspectors and Iran deceived the world, and when North Korea was preparing to enrich uranium even while it negotiated new "disarmament" deals with the Clinton Administration. One obvious conclusion is that none of these proliferators believed the U.S. or U.N. were serious about confronting them. And at the time they were right.

All of that changed with the Bush policy of challenging terrorists and the states that support them after 9/11. With the fall of the Taliban and Saddam, the world's dictators have learned that protecting terrorists or pursuing WMD can interfere with lifetime tenure. So they are deciding to turn state's evidence, against themselves and others. Or to put it in terms even

Washington may understand: The Bush strategy is working.



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