

# Arnaud de Borchgrave

## Nuclear Terrorism Multiplies World Peril

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Anyone who's still anyone in the field of nuclear arms control agrees that the world is more dangerous today than it was at the height of the Cold War.

North Korea's second nuclear test, followed by a renunciation of the 1953 armistice agreements and more missile firings, is the latest red flag on a dark nuclear horizon. Nuclear terrorism, unthinkable during the Cold War, is now the most immediate fear of the experts.

Whether this is an ailing petulant North Korean toddler throwing his nuclear teddy bear out the stroller to gain the attention he craves, or a sick, paranoid dictator currying favor with his aging, bemedaled generals to ensure a smooth succession to the hermit throne for one of his sons, may never be known.

The only power that has any influence over Kim Jong-Il is China. But China's leaders are reluctant to wield it lest they provoke the total collapse of the Dear Leader's gulag.

That is also South Korea's main concern. A sudden power vacuum, or a bloody struggle for power, would make the bill for German reunification — \$1 trillion over 10 years — seem like chump change next to Korean reunification. East Germany had an industrial and social infrastructure; North Korea would have to build from the ground up in every field of human endeavor.

Korea is just one of the nuclear nightmares haunting the world stage. Pakistan, in the throes of near-civil war, is adding feverishly to its nuclear arsenal of between 80 and 100 weapons. Roedad Khan, a pundit who is the former head of the Pakistani civil service wrote: "These are critical days in Pakistan. There is no steady hand on the tiller of government. The survival of the country, its sovereignty, its stunted democracy, its hard-won independent judiciary, all are on the line. In these dangerous times, anything is possible. I shall not be surprised at any event that may happen. The country is gripped by fear and uncertainty . . . The ship of state is decrepit and leaky. The sea is turbulent. The captain has . . . no compass. The crew is inexperienced. If the nation doesn't wake up, we will all go down like the Titanic. History will remember both that (President) Zardari failed to hear the warning bells and the politicians failed to ring them loud enough."

Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, says he is satisfied that Pakistan's nukes are under a goof-proof, fail-safe system, and that warheads and their missile delivery vehicles are stored in separate places in different parts of a country of 175 million Muslims. But no U.S. officer has been allowed to see any of the storage sites.

Pakistani officers challenge, "You haven't let us see how yours are stored and safeguarded, so why should we let you see ours?"

More worrisome for Western intelligence services is the Pakistani nuclear establishment in Kahuta, 36 miles from Islamabad. Created by How-I-learned-to-stop-worrying-and-love-the-bomb Abdul Qadeer Khan, the super-secret Khan Research Laboratories and missile-building facility employs some 7,000 nuclear engineers and scientists, and enriches enough plutonium to produce about six nuclear weapons a year.

Dr. "Strangelove" Khan peddled nuclear secrets to America's enemies — North Korea (in exchange for missile

technology) and Iran (for big bucks) — and is idolized as a national hero. Presented with the CIA's evidence against A.Q. Khan, former President Pervez Musharraf placed him under house arrest after he made a groveling public confession on television — in English, not in Urdu. But Musharraf never allowed any contact with American intelligence officials.

Recently exonerated, with apologies, by the Supreme Court, the former metallurgist still has a huge following as a national hero second only to the nation's founder, Ali Jinnah. In Kahuta, many of the buildings are named after him. And the CIA and MI6 have a hard time keeping tabs on possible leakage of nuclear materials to al-Qaida, still based in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and their Taliban insurgent allies, now active in Pakistan's four provinces and over most of Afghanistan.

That leaves Iran's nuclear ambitions as another red flag on a troubled geopolitical horizon that makes the world far less safe than it ever was during the Cold War. A.Q. Khan began helping the mullahs with nuclear know-how almost 30 years ago. Shortly after the clerics kicked out the late Shah's pro-Western monarchy in early 1979, the supreme leader, Ayatollah ("Sign of God") Ruhollah Khomeini, gave his benediction to a nuclear weapons future. The Shah told this reporter Iran would one day be a full-fledged nuclear power, and when he went into exile, Iran had 10 nuclear reactors on order: five from the United States and five from Western Europe.

Iran's nukes also are pulling Israel's new Netanyahu government and the Obama administration apart. For the first time since 1956, when President Eisenhower ordered Israel, France and Britain out of their occupation of the Suez Canal, U.S. and Israeli strategic interests are no longer seen as one and the same.

For Israel, Jewish settlements in the West Bank have nothing to do with Iran's secret nuclear weapons program. A majority of Israelis say Iran's coming nuclear attractions constitute an existential crisis for the survival of a Jewish state. For President Obama, Israel's creeping annexation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem is making a Palestinian state impossible, which, in turn, leads to what Jordan's King Abdullah predicts will be another war in 2010.

Israel's new strategic affairs minister, Moshe Ya'alon, minced no words: "Settlement construction will not be halted," and "Israel will not allow the U.S. to dictate its policy."

Benjamin Netanyahu's new team is also confident that Congress would not allow Obama to make aid to Israel conditional on a settlement freeze, let alone dismantling 160 major colonies that house about 300,000 Jews.

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