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Chem-Bio News

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CB Daily Report

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PAKISTAN'S BOMB AND SAUDI ARABIA

By Julian Borger
The Guardian (UK)
May 11, 2010

"Western intelligence officials believe that Pakistan has pledged to provide nuclear weapons to Saudi Arabia in a Middle East crisis, but would Islamabad keep its end of the bargain?"

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"The Centre for European Studies and the German Marshall Fund of the United States has just held a small conference in Brussels called "Transatlantic test: What should the West do with Iran?" There were a bunch of Nato types there and some diplomats from Europe and the Middle East, and some very interesting talk. What struck me were the relatively sanguine views on the knock-on effect of Iran going nuclear (or achieving break-out capacity).

Putting it briefly: Turkey would not jeopardise the Nato umbrella by going nuclear unilaterally. Egypt has considered its options and decided it cannot afford to go nuclear and risk losing its annual US grant. The biggest worry is Saudi Arabia, which cannot rely on a US nuclear umbrella for reasons of domestic and regional politics.

According to western intelligence sources (the meeting was under Chatham House rules so I am not allowed to be more specific) the Saudi monarchy paid for up to 60% of the Pakistani nuclear programme, and in return has the option to buy a small nuclear arsenal ('five to six warheads) off the shelf if things got tough in the neighbourhood.

There has been much reporting about this alleged deal over recent years, notably by The Guardian back in 2003, when Ewen MacAskill and Ian Traynor wrote about a Saudi strategic review to weigh the kingdom's nuclear options."

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"Another interesting point to come out of the Brussels meeting was how difficult it is inside Nato to make policy or even to talk about policy towards Iran, because Turkey will not allow it. That makes it a bit awkward when it comes to framing the alliance's New Strategic Concept later this year."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/julian-borger-global-security-blog/2010/may/11/pakistan-saudi-arabia>

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UN ATOMIC CHIEF AMANO WARNS THAT NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS MAY RISE

By Jonathan Tirone
Bloomberg
May 17, 2010

"Nuclear accidents may occur more often as atomic technology spreads and countries build more reactors, International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Yukiya Amano said.

"Member states are considering the introduction of nuclear power plants," Amano said during a May 14 interview in his 28th-floor office overlooking Vienna. "We cannot exclude accidents. If there are more, we have certain risks."

The IAEA expects as many as 25 nations to start developing nuclear-power facilities by 2030. The total global investment in building new atomic plants is about \$270 billion, the Arlington, Virginia-based Pew Center on Global Climate Change said on Feb. 17. Interest in nuclear power is growing at the fastest rate since the Three Mile Island accident in the U.S. in 1979 and the Chernobyl explosion in Ukraine in 1986, IAEA statistics show.

The additional uranium resources needed to power the reactors may create security hazards for which the public must prepare, said Amano, 63, a career diplomat.

"We have the problem of nuclear security and nuclear terrorism," he said. People need to understand that "if such an incident takes place, they will be exposed to radiation."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601109&sid=aHkU6Oce2dJ4&pos=15>

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IRAQI TECHNICIANS DISMANTLING HUSSEIN'S NUCLEAR PLANTS

By Frederik Pleitgen and Yousif Bassil

CNN

May 18, 2010

"The Tuwaitha research complex, about 18 kilometers (11 miles) southeast of Baghdad, was bombed by Israel in its 1981 airstrike on Iraq's Tammuz 1 research reactor. It was bombed again during the Persian Gulf War of 1991, and it was looted extensively after the 2003 U.S. invasion that ousted Hussein.

Now, engineers and technicians are working to dismantle the laboratories and equipment at the site, but the extensive contamination left behind complicates their work."

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"Workers and visitors have to wear protective suits and masks around the facility, where about 20 people are at work so far. Iraq's ministry of Science and Technology said it is training more specialists to decommission the facility, but acknowledged the cleanup could take decades.

"We have 18 facilities in Tuwaitha," said Fuad al Musawi, Iraq's deputy science and technology minister. "We have another 10 facilities around the country. So you can imagine how long it will take."

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"The Iraq Survey Group found basements full of radioactive water in some of the buildings, and the U.S. military later spent \$70 million ensuring the safe transportation of 550 metric tons of non-weapons grade uranium oxide -- known as "yellowcake" -- to Canada."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/05/16/iraq.nuclear.legacy/>

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[UK] ESSEX HOME RAIDED OVER IRAN DIRTY BOMB THREAT

By David Leppard
The Times (UK)
May 16, 2010

"A BRITISH chemicals firm is involved in a secret MI5 inquiry into the illegal export to Iran of material that could make a radioactive "dirty bomb".

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) raided the Essex home of the firm's former sales manager after a tip that potentially lethal chemicals, including cobalt, were sold to Iran last summer.

The trade went ahead despite warnings from Whitehall officials that it posed an "unacceptable risk of diversion to a weapons of mass destruction programme of concern".

Details of the dirty bomb case are disclosed in dozens of pages of documents lodged in the High Court by Remet UK, a chemicals firm based in Rochester, Kent."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article7127761.ece>

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ISRAEL PLAYS WARGAME ASSUMING IRAN HAS NUCLEAR BOMB

Reuters
May 17, 2010

"A nuclear-armed Iran would blunt Israel's military autonomy, a wargame involving former Israeli generals and diplomats has concluded, though some players predicted Tehran would also exercise restraint.

Sunday's event at a campus north of Tel Aviv followed other high-profile Iran simulations in Israel and the United States in recent months. But it broke new ground by assuming the existence of what both countries have pledged to prevent: an Iranian bomb.

"Iranian deterrence proved dizzyingly effective," Eitan Ben-Eliahu, a retired air force commander who played the Israeli defence minister, said in his summary of the 20-team meeting.

Though the wargame saw Iran declaring itself a nuclear power in 2011, the ensuing confrontations were by proxy, in Lebanon. In one, emboldened Hezbollah guerrillas fired missiles at the Defence Ministry in Tel Aviv. That was followed by U.S. and Israeli intelligence findings that Iran had slipped radioactive materials to its Lebanese cohort, to assemble a crude device.

Neither move drew Israeli attacks, though Ben-Eliahu said his delegation had received discreet encouragement from Arab rivals of Iran to "go all the way" in retaliating."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE64G0BQ>.

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