

Air Force refused to fly weapons to Middle East theater

By Wayne Madsen ? WMR Sept. 24, 2007

WMR has learned from U.S. and foreign intelligence sources that the B-52 transporting six stealth AGM-129 Advanced Cruise Missiles, each armed with a W-80-1 nuclear warhead, on August 30, were destined for the Middle East via Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana.

However, elements of the Air Force, supported by U.S. intelligence agency personnel, successfully revealed the ultimate destination of the nuclear weapons and the mission was aborted due to internal opposition within the Air Force and U.S. Intelligence Community. Yesterday, the *Washington Post* attempted to explain away the fact that America's nuclear command and control system broke down in an unprecedented manner by reporting that it was the result of "security failures at multiple levels." It is now apparent that the command and control breakdown, reported as a BENT SPEAR incident to the Secretary of Defense and White House, was not the result of a command and control chain-of-command "failures" but the result of a revolt and push back by various echelons within the Air Force and intelligence agencies against a planned U.S. attack on Iran using nuclear and conventional weapons.

The *Washington Post* story on BENT SPEAR may have actually been an effort in damage control by the Bush administration. WMR has been informed by a knowledgeable source that one of the six nuclear-armed cruise missiles was, and may still be, unaccounted for. In that case, the nuclear reporting incident would have gone far beyond BENT SPEAR to a National Command Authority alert known as EMPTY QUIVER, with the special classification of PINNACLE.

Just as this report was being prepared, *Newsweek* reported that Vice President Dick Cheney's recently-departed Middle East adviser, David Wurmser, told a small group of advisers some months ago that Cheney had considered asking Israel to launch a missile attack on the Iranian nuclear site at Natanz. Cheney reasoned that after an Iranian retaliatory strike, the United States would have ample reasons to launch its own massive attack on Iran. However, plans for Israel to attack Iran directly were altered to an Israeli attack on a supposed Syrian-Iranian-North Korean nuclear installation in northern Syria.

WMR has learned that a U.S. attack on Iran using nuclear and conventional weapons was scheduled to coincide with Israel's September 6 air attack on a reputed Syrian nuclear facility in Dayr az-Zwar, near the village of Tal Abyad, in northern Syria, near the Turkish border. Israel's attack, code named OPERATION ORCHARD, was to provide a reason for the U.S. to strike Iran. The neo-conservative propaganda onslaught was to cite the cooperation of the George Bush's three remaining "Axis of Evil" states ? Syria, Iran, and North Korea ? to justify a sustained Israeli attack on Syria and a massive U.S.

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Wayne Madsen: Air Force refused to fly weapons to Middle East theater Its been disclosed that the six nuclear armed cruise missiles transported across the U.S. recently were destined for the Middle East to be used in a nuclear strike. But it was aborted due to internal opposition within the U.S. Air

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military attack on Iran.

WMR has learned from military sources on both sides of the Atlantic that there was a definite connection between Israel's OPERATION ORCHARD and BENT SPEAR involving the B-52 that flew the six nuclear-armed cruise missiles from Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota to Barksdale. There is also a connection between these two events as the Pentagon's highly-classified PROJECT CHECKMATE, a compartmented U.S. Air Force program that has been working on an attack plan for Iran since June 2007, around the same time that Cheney was working on the joint Israeli-U.S. attack scenario on Iran.

PROJECT CHECKMATE was leaked in an article by military analyst Eric Margolis in the Rupert Murdoch-owned newspaper, the *Times of London*, is a program that involves over two dozen Air Force officers and is headed by Brig. Gen. Lawrence Stutzriem and his chief civilian adviser, Dr. Lani Kass, a former Israeli military intelligence officer who, astoundingly, is now involved in planning a joint U.S.-Israeli massive military attack on Iran that involves a "decapitating" blow on Iran by hitting between three to four thousand targets in the country. Stutzriem and Kass report directly to the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Michael Moseley, who has also been charged with preparing a report on the B-52/nuclear weapons incident.

Kass' area of speciality is cyber-warfare, which includes ensuring "information blockades," such as that imposed by the Israeli government on the Israeli media regarding the air attack on the alleged Syrian "nuclear installation." British intelligence sources have reported that the Israeli attack on Syria was a "true flag" attack originally designed to foreshadow a U.S. attack on Iran. After the U.S. Air Force push back against transporting the six cruise nuclear-armed AGM-129s to the Middle East, Israel went ahead with its attack on Syria in order to help ratchet up tensions between Washington on one side and Damascus, Tehran, and Pyongyang on the other.

The other part of CHECKMATE's brief is to ensure that a media "perception management" is waged against Syria, Iran, and North Korea. This involves articles such as that which appeared with Joby Warrick's and Walter Pincus' bylines in yesterdays *Washington Post*. The article, titled "The Saga of a Bent Spear," quotes a number of seasoned Air Force nuclear weapons experts as saying that such an incident is unprecedented in the history of the Air Force. For example, Retired Air Force General Eugene Habiger, the former chief of the U.S. Strategic Command, said he has been in the "nuclear business" since 1966 and has never been aware of an incident "more disturbing."

Command and control breakdowns involving U.S. nuclear weapons are unprecedented, except for that fact that the U.S. military is now waging an internal war against neo-cons who are embedded in the U.S. government and military chain of command who are intent on using nuclear weapons in a pre-emptive war with Iran.

CHECKMATE and OPERATION ORCHARD would have provided the cover for a pre-emptive U.S. and Israeli attack on Iran had it not been for BENT SPEAR involving the B-52. In on the plan to launch a pre-emptive attack on Iran involving nuclear weapons were, according to our sources, Cheney, National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley; members of the CHECKMATE team at the Pentagon, who have close connections to Israeli intelligence and pro-Israeli think tanks in Washington, including the Hudson Institute; British Foreign Secretary David Miliband, a political adviser to Tony Blair prior to becoming a Member of Parliament; Israeli political leaders like Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu; and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, who did his part last week to ratchet up tensions

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with Iran by suggesting that war with Iran was a probability. Kouchner retracted his statement after the U.S. plans for Iran were delayed.

Although the Air Force tried to keep the B-52 nuclear incident from the media, anonymous Air Force personnel leaked the story to *Military Times* on September 5, the day before the Israelis attacked the alleged nuclear installation in Syria and the day planned for the simultaneous U.S. attack on Iran. The leaking of classified information on U.S. nuclear weapons disposition or movement to the media, is, itself, unprecedented. Air Force regulations require the sending of classified BEELINE reports to higher Air Force authorities on the disclosure of classified Air Force information to the media.

In another highly unusual move, Defense Secretary Robert Gates has asked an outside inquiry board to look into BENT SPEAR, even before the Air Force has completed its own investigation, a virtual vote of no confidence in the official investigation being conducted by Major General Douglas Raaberg, chief of air and space operations at the Air Combat Command.

Gates asked former Air Force Chief of Staff, retired General Larry Welch, to lead a Defense Science Board task force that will also look into the BENT SPEAR incident. The official Air Force investigation has reportedly been delayed for unknown reasons. Welch is President and CEO of the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA), a federally-funded research contractor that operates three research centers, including one for Office of Science and Technology Policy in the Executive Office of the President and another for the National Security Agency. One of the board members of IDA is Dr. Suzanne H. Woolsey of the Paladin Capital Group and wife of former CIA director and arch-neocon James Woolsey. WMR has learned that neither the upper echelons of the State Department nor the British Foreign Office were privy to OPERATION ORCHARD, although Hadley briefed President Bush on Israeli spy satellite intelligence that showed the Syrian installation was a joint nuclear facility built with North Korean and Iranian assistance. However, it is puzzling why Hadley would rely on Israeli imagery intelligence (IMINT) from its OFEK (Horizon) 7 satellite when considering that U.S. IMINT satellites have greater capabilities.

The Air Force's "information warfare" campaign against media reports on CHECKMATE and OPERATION ORCHARD also affected international reporting of the recent International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolution asking Israel to place its nuclear weapons program under IAEA controls, similar to those that the United States wants imposed on Iran and North Korea. The resolution also called for a nuclear-free zone throughout the Middle East. The IAEA's resolution, titled "Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East," was passed by the 144-member IAEA General Meeting on September 20 by a vote of 53 to 2, with 47 abstentions. The only two countries to vote against were Israel and the United States. However, the story carried from the IAEA meeting in Vienna by Reuters, the Associated Press, and Agence France Press, was that it was Arab and Islamic nations that voted for the resolution.

This was yet more perception management carried out by CHECKMATE, the White House, and their allies in Europe and Israel with the connivance of the media. In fact, among the 53 nations that voted for the resolution were China, Russia, India, Ireland, and Japan. The 47 abstentions were described as votes "against" the resolution even though an abstention is neither a vote for nor against a measure. America's close allies, including Britain, France, Australia, Canada, and Georgia, all abstained.

Suspiciously, the IAEA carried only a brief item on the resolution concerning

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Israel's nuclear program and a roll call vote was not available either at the IAEA's web site ? www.iaea.org ? or in the media.

The perception management campaign by the neocon operational cells in the Bush administration, Israel and Europe was designed to keep a focus on Iran's nuclear program, not on Israel's. Any international examination of Israel's nuclear weapons program would likely bring up Israeli nuclear scientist Mordechai Vanunu, a convert from Judaism to Christianity, who was kidnapped in Rome by a Mossad "honey trap" named Cheryl Bentov (aka, Cindy) and a Mossad team in 1986 and held against his will in Israel ever since. Vanunu's knowledge of the Israeli nuclear weapons program would focus on the country's own role in nuclear proliferation, including its program to share nuclear weapons technology with apartheid South Africa and Taiwan in the late 1970s and 1980s. The role of Ronald Reagan's Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Ken Adelman in Israeli's nuclear proliferation during the time frame 1983-1987 would also come under scrutiny. Adelman, a member of the Reagan-Bush transition State Department team from November 1980 to January 1981, voiced his understanding for the nuclear weapons programs of Israel, South Africa, and Taiwan in a June 28, 1981 *New York Times* article titled, "3 Nations Widening Nuclear Contacts." The journalist who wrote the article was Judith Miller. Adelman felt that the three countries wanted nuclear weapons because of their ostracism from the West, the third world, and the hostility from the Communist countries. Of course, today, the same argument can be used by Iran, North Korea, and other "Axis of Evil" nations so designated by the neocons in the Bush administration and other governments.

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There are also news reports that suggest an intelligence relationship between Israel and North Korea. On July 21, 2004, New Zealand's *Dominion Post* reported that three Mossad agents were involved in espionage in New Zealand. Two of the Mossad agents, Uriel Kelman and Elisha Cara (aka Kra), were arrested and imprisoned by New Zealand police (an Israeli diplomat in Canberra, Amir Lati, was expelled by Australia and New Zealand intelligence identified a fourth Mossad agent involved in the New Zealand espionage operation in Singapore). The third Mossad agent in New Zealand, Zev William Barkan (aka Lev Bruckenstein), fled New Zealand -- for North Korea.

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New Zealand Foreign Minister Phil Goff revealed that Barkan, a former Israeli Navy diver, had previously worked at the Israeli embassy in Vienna, which is also the headquarters of the IAEA. He was cited by the *Sydney Morning Herald* as trafficking in passports stolen from foreign tourists in Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia. New Zealand's One News reported that Barkan was in North Korea to help the nation build a wall to keep its citizens from leaving.

The nuclear brinkmanship involving the United States and Israel and the breakdown in America's command and control systems have every major capital around the world wondering about the Bush administration's true intentions.

NOTE: WMR understands the risks to informed individuals in reporting the events of August 29/30, to the present time, that concern the discord within the U.S. Air Force, U.S. intelligence agencies, and other military services. Any source with relevant information and who wishes to contact us anonymously may drop off sealed correspondence at or send mail via the Postal Service to: Wayne Madsen, c/o The Front Desk, National Press Club, 13th Floor, 529 14th St., NW, Washington, DC, 20045."

Also see: "Simple Error" My Ass

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