

# THE DEFENSE MONITOR

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## *Dear Friends & Colleagues:*

Many of you are aware of CDI's 30-year history of research and commentary on U.S. defense topics. You may also have noticed the expanding breadth of our international projects and activities, such as our ground-breaking *China Security Bulletin* featuring contributions from a retired Chinese general, and a forthcoming report on Russia's defense spending by a Russian scholar who heads our Moscow office. To better reflect our global scope and project diversity, we have created the **World Security Institute** — which can be thought of as our "holding company." We felt that this title better describes all of our activities that now encompass a wider definition of "security."

Other notable changes include the creation of the WSI International Media Division — the Chi-

nese, Russian, Arabic, and Farsi language information services launched originally under the CDI banner head — and Azimuth Media, an independent company that produces the weekly PBS show "Foreign Exchange with Fareed Zakaria." Due to the overwhelming success of these innovative projects, there was a need to separate core research projects at CDI from independent journalism activities reaching audiences across the globe. Although the projects will maintain a cooperative affiliation, all editorial control and content will remain distinct among divisions.

Please rest assured that the **Center for Defense Information** remains as vibrant and vital as ever. As an independent, core division within our new entity, it will continue its research and unflinching

commentary on defense matters. The *Defense Monitor* will remain a CDI publication, but it occasionally will include updates on WSI projects.

For more information, go to the new WSI website: [www.worldsecurityinstitute.org](http://www.worldsecurityinstitute.org), or to CDI's website: [www.cdi.org](http://www.cdi.org).

And as always, we — as Director of CDI and President of WSI — appreciate your continued support and feedback as our organization tackles the security challenges of the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Theresa Hitchens, *Director,  
Center for Defense Information*

Bruce G. Blair, *President,  
World Security Institute*

## **Iran and the Rogues: America's Nuclear Obsession**

*Bruce Blair, CDI Senior Advisor and WSI President.*

*This was originally published on CDI's website on Sept. 19, 2005, as part of "Bruce Blair's Nuclear Column."*

Nuclear weapons are supposedly making a comeback after fading from prominence following the end of the Cold War. Nukes are seen as assuming newfound significance as the rogue states Iran and North Korea move closer to acquiring them, and as the United

States looks to its own nuclear arsenal for a solution. Among other voices heard sounding the tocsin is the Bush administration's, which is making a real fuss over the efforts by those nations to go nuclear, as it did over the nuclear program imputed to Iraq before the war. And much clamor is being stirred by the Pentagon's plans to develop specially designed nukes to use

preemptively to neutralize the emerging rogue nuclear threats. While diplomatic pressure, cou-

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pled with economic incentives, has been exerted to arrest the momentum of rogue proliferation, President George W. Bush repeatedly refers to the possible necessity of military action, possibly involving U.S. nuclear strikes. Without saying so explicitly, nuking Iran or North Korea is one of the options on the table that he insists will remain there.

It seems as though a rather volatile new situation has descended on the world, but history tells a different story. In fact, neither the perception of a rogue nuclear threat nor the idea of resorting to U.S. nuclear weapons to suppress it is new to Pentagon planners. On the contrary, a nascent nuclear threat was attributed to these very same countries over 20 years ago, and nuclear strike plans were devised to suppress it. These early plans were as unsound, extreme, and surreal as the preemptive plans being drawn up today.

Twenty years ago, Iran and North Korea (along with China, Syria and Iraq) were minor nuclear nuisances compared to the Soviet Union, whose huge nuclear arsenal posed a threat of apocalyptic proportions to the United States and U.S. allies. The main U.S. nuclear strike plan, known as the Single Integrated Operational Plan, or SIOP, envisioned rapid strikes by U.S. strategic forces against a Soviet target set consisting of some 16,000 targets. Since the U.S. strategic arsenal was brimming over at the time with upwards of 13,000 nuclear weapons, a full-scale assault on the Soviet Union would

have left it a smoking, radiating ruin with over one-hundred million dead and at least as many wounded and sick. The comparably over-sized Soviet strategic arsenal would have inflicted even greater destruction on the United States, Western Europe and Japan. The collective overkill in the two arsenals would have left their respective countries and much of the rest of the northern hemisphere in total ruins and agony.

*Now that the U.S.-Soviet nuclear rivalry has become the side-show... U.S. nuclear planners enjoy new license to conceive scenarios for using U.S. nukes against the rogue states and China.*

So the nascent nuclear powers such as Iran and North Korea, along with the others states mentioned above, including China which had been removed from the U.S. strategic war plan in 1981 following the normalization of Sino-American relations in 1979, were sideshows in the grand game of nuclear brinkmanship between the Americans and Soviets. But these sideshows were still seriously factored into U.S. nuclear planning. War gamers argued that Iran or one of the other putative nuclear rogues or China might emerge from the ashes of a U.S.-Soviet nuclear exchange and exploit U.S.

weakness using nuclear blackmail. In their imaginations, the United States stood to be defeated by upstart nuclear powers such as Iran in the wake of a cataclysmic strike by Russia that utterly devastated the United States. And therefore it was imperative in their estimation for the United States to organize its war plans to ensure that a counter-rogue nuclear expeditionary force composed of surviving U.S. nuclear forces would be able to destroy the nuclear infrastructure — reactors and nuclear-related facilities, as well as nuclear command and control and the means of delivering them — in Iran and other countries that sat out the opening salvos between the Cold War adversaries.

This scenario of post-World War III strikes against Iran or others obviously rested on flimsy evidence of the actual nuclear weapons threat that these countries could have posed at the time. In the case of Iran, U.S. strategic forces were assigned to attack the country's incipient nuclear threat that in the mid-1980s was still at least 23 to 34 years from realization. Hard intelligence was far more elusive then than today, and evidence was immaterial anyway. U.S. planners simply assumed the extreme worst-case for both the capabilities and the intentions of the inscrutable and angry regimes in Iran and elsewhere. That the imagined context of the post-World War III conflict between the United States and Iran was utter nonsense was lost on the war gamers.

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## “He Did Charm Us”

WSI Russian and Asian Studies Programs Director Nikolai Zlobin on his September 2005 meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin

*Originally published in the September 2005 issue of the Russian magazine, Profil. Interviewed by Vladimir Rudakov; translated by A. Ignatkin.*

**Question:** I hear the unthinkable... that you literally forced a confession from Putin at the meeting.

**Zlobin:** When I got a chance to ask questions at the meeting, I said I was interested in the situation in 2008. There is widespread opinion in Russia that it is going to be a major political milestone in the history of the country and that it may even foment a grave political crisis. A great deal is being said and written on the subject. Political scientists close to the Kremlin (or the ones considered close to it) imply again and again that a faction that is running the country nowadays does not contemplate stepping down. That these men are looking for ways and means to legalize their continued stay in the Kremlin. That's what I told the president...

“All right,” he said. “What's the question?” I asked if he intended to run for president in 2008, and amend the Constitution suitably. He gave me a shrewd look and asked, “Is that a wish? You are putting me in a difficult position,” “No, it's just a question. Vladimir Vladimirovich, I ask questions here. Just a brief yes or no.”

A lot of my colleagues told me afterwards that this was not the proper manner for talking to presidents. By the way, he never got



Two WSI members were selected to meet with Putin: Nikolai Zlobin and David Johnson, pictured above.

mad at any question. On the contrary, he turned on all his charm and charisma. He did charm us, I'm telling you. No wonder. He is a professional.

Putin said, “I'm telling you again that I'm not going to run for president again or amend the Constitution...As for the team in the corridors of power nowadays, the team that wants to remain,” he said, “let it if that's what it wants. There is no way of forbidding it. This is a democracy, after all.”

**Question:** What is your estimate of his words?

**Zlobin:** As I see it, these two “No's” in his part change everything in Russian political life. Moreover, he gave his answer in the presence of three dozen Western po-

litical scientists specializing in Russia. Moreover, the political scientists who form public opinion in their respective countries. Breaking these promises will be the end of his political career in the West. It will ruin the image he toiled so hard to form these last six years, and Putin knows it... You know, I had asked the same question of Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov that same morning and he said that he would not run for president in 2008. That's how inside of 24 hours I withdrew two major political figures from the 2008 presidential race...

**Question:** I.e. you decapitated Russia for years to come, right? Who, if not one of these two?

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**Nikolai Zlobin:** I deliberately refrained from asking Putin about successors. Three years in advance, it would have been wrong. He himself may not know the name yet. Even if he does... Just imagine what would have happened had he revealed the name. The man would have found himself under fire the very next day. He would have never forgiven me [with a laugh].

Seriously, I plan to ask it of Putin in another year. If we are called again, of course.

**Question:** Do you think the president meant it?

**Zlobin:** I hate to think I was tricked. Not only I, you understand. Too many will be tricked... I think he meant it.

**Question:** You said it: Putin is leaving but his team stays on to fight. The situation in Russia being what it is its chances of success are not what I call slim. So, what was the question you got an answer to? Concerning Mr. Putin who wants out or whether the team and the policy in Russia are to be changed in 2008?

**Zlobin:** If Putin stays on after 2008, it will be the end of democracy in Russia. If he steps down regardless of what will follow, it will be a step aimed at development of democracy. From a long-term, point of view, of course. No matter who succeeds.

As for Putin's team, (...) there are two views on that. View One: Putin is a strong president and man who chose himself a team of nobodies and controls it nowadays. View Two: Putin is not a leader at

all, he is but a puppet in the hands of either the so-called "Family" or his own team. I do not really know how things are.

All the same, I lean to the opinion that there can be no Putin's team without Putin himself. Withdraw him, and the team will find remaining in the corridors of power very difficult indeed. This is my personal opinion, of course.

*How much longer would you have wondered about Putin's plans for 2008, were it not possible for us to ask questions.*

**Question:** You met with Putin last year, in the wake of the Beslan tragedy, and you told me you had had the impression that Putin was in political solitude but did not fear it in the least. Has this meeting changed anything in your perception?

**Zlobin:** As I see it, he remains unafraid of political solitude. There is a new nuance, however. I'd say that Putin is not afraid of his political future now. The impression is that he has made some sort of decision. Perhaps, it even enabled him to retain control over his team. That is why he seems a stronger president now than he was a year ago. From this point of view, he may even be less alone nowadays. At the same time, they all fear him and he... he despises them all. At the very least, they do not have his respect. I'm absolutely convinced of it.

**Question:** The Kremlin is besieged by fears nowadays — the fear of disintegration of Russia, of an orange revolution, extremists a.k.a. Limonov's men, skinheads, etc. Do you get the impression that the authorities are becoming paranoid?

**Zlobin:** I'd call it political paranoia the authorities mistake for political reality. The authorities are even too insecure to be aware of the necessity of the opposition.

Perhaps, they even feel that they are doing something wrong... In fact, the president does not even have anybody on an equal footing to talk to. There is no use talking to the elite. All it thinks about is how whatever its betters say may be converted into new benefits. I'd say that this is why Putin is more open to Western experts.

**Question:** What if you are just being used? Say, with the purpose of forming a proper image in the eyes of the international community?

**Zlobin:** We are. The Kremlin is even successful to some extent. But that's an inevitable evil. It would have been much worse to do nothing and leave us completely in the dark — just like Russian political scientists and journalists who are forced to operate on the basis of rumors and innuendo because of the closeness of the Kremlin. But this use is a two-way street. How much longer would you have wondered about Putin's plans for 2008, were it not possible for us to ask questions like that? ■

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# Annual CRS Report Shows Five Year High in Weapons Sales

Rachel Stohl, CDI Senior Analyst, and Daniel Schaeffer, CDI Research Assistant

The annual Congressional Research Service report, "Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 1997-2004," was released on Aug. 29, 2005. The report reveals that arms transfer agreements worldwide amounted to nearly \$37 billion in 2004, the largest total since 2000, and well above the 2003 sum of \$28.5 billion. Of the 2004 total, nearly \$21.8 billion worth of agreements were made with developing countries, also the highest total since 2000.

The CRS report defines developing nations as all countries except the United States, Russia, the European nations, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The report examines 14 categories of conventional weapons: tanks and self-propelled guns, artillery, armored personnel carriers and armored cars, major surface combatants, minor surface combatants, submarines, guided missile patrol boats, supersonic combat aircraft, subsonic combat aircraft, other aircraft, helicopters, surface-to-air missiles, surface-to-surface missiles, and anti-ship missiles.

The United States remains the world's largest exporter of arms to developing nations and led all countries in both arms transfer agreements and arms deliveries in 2004, including \$6.9 billion of transfer agreements with developing nations, up from the 2003 total of \$6.5 billion. Russia was the second largest arms exporter to the developing world in 2004, making \$5.9 billion in arms transfer

agreements, which correlates to a 27 percent share. The United States and Russia together accounted for nearly 60 percent of all agreements with the developing world.

The primary market for U.S. arms in the developing world continues to be the Near East, and the United States remains the largest arms exporter to the region. Between 2001 and 2004, U.S. transfer agreements with the Near East came to \$18.8 billion, or just over 66 percent, which marks a slight decrease from the totals between

*The United States remains the world's largest exporter of arms to developing nations and led all countries in both arms transfer agreements and arms deliveries in 2004.*

1997 and 2000, during which 75.5 percent of U.S. agreements were with Near East countries.

Asia has recently emerged as the primary overall destination for arms within the developing world, accounting for 49 percent of agreements between 2001 and 2004. This is due in large part to India's rank in 2004 as the leading purchaser of arms in the developing world, with \$5.7 billion in agreements. Russia has typically dominated the Indian market, but in recent years India has made an effort to expand its supply

base. U.S. companies were quick to express interest when India announced in June that it was in the market for 126 fighter jets, further facilitated by the reversal of long-standing U.S. policy that until then prohibited the sale of advanced warplanes to India. More recently, U.S. and Indian officials met to discuss possible sales of weapon systems including Aegis missile systems and Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC)-3 missile defense systems.

The opening of the Indian market parallels the other development that catapulted Asia to the top of the list, specifically the tremendous growth of the Chinese market. While China ranked seventh in arms transfer agreements with a value of \$4.9 billion between 1997 and 2000, the country saw a dramatic increase to \$10.4 billion in arms agreements between 2001 and 2004, which was first among all countries. The CRS report notes that this increase "reflects the military modernization effort by China, beginning in the mid-1990s, and based primarily on major arms agreements with Russia." Furthermore, the United States is using its diplomatic muscle to restrict China's access to arms and technology transfers. Recently, under U.S. pressure, Israel announced that it would renege on its agreement to sell China a radar-busting drone based on U.S. technology, and subsequently agreed to consult with the United States before selling arms to China in the future, essentially shutting them out of the market. And, earlier

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## Congress and Katrina Oversight

Winslow T. Wheeler, Director, Straus Military Reform Project

Both Republicans and Democrats are well into their finger-pointing over the horrors in New Orleans in early September. The nation's capital has been awash with proposals to study the disaster and lay blame. Recent history demonstrates why every model suggested for the investigation is a phony.

Particularly transparent is the "Hurricane Katrina Joint Review Committee" proposed by the Republican congressional leadership, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., and Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, R-Ill. Their effort would include Democrats but only as a minority, thereby preventing Democrats from issuing subpoenas and calling witnesses. With partisan votes in the House and Senate, the Republicans are imposing their will.

The Democrats want independent investigatory powers, but after hearing House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Calif., shrilly demand numerous Republican resignations in advance of any investigation, does anyone seriously think a Democrat-controlled investigation will be any better?

Vice President Richard Cheney elegantly described the Republican-controlled charade as bipartisan and bicameral, modeled on the Iran-Contra Investigation he served on as a House Member in the mid-1980s. That exercise culminated in convictions of officials in the Reagan presidency, i.e. Republicans; so that must be a good model, right? It probably slipped Cheney's mind

that the Iran-Contra examination was run by Democrats.

Like the other proposals, the Iran-Contra study had a fatal flaw: it was run by members of Congress. Either a whitewash or an easily dismissible partisan swipe is the predictable result, depending on who controls the White House and Congress. Despite a long and distinguished history of competent investigations, today's Congress is incapable of performing a proficient inquiry under its own control.

*Given the partisan stakes at issue with Katrina, there is little reason to expect a departure from the familiar pattern of porking, posturing, and studied ignorance.*

Visit a congressional hearing, especially one on national security, where you'd expect some seriousness. The hearing will start with long and decorous "opening statements" by the chairman and ranking Democrat. The more important the hearing, the more likely every member present will insist on giving a speech of equal length, either before the witness testifies or when it is that member's turn to ask questions.

Once the witness has testified — his or her statement usually limited to 10 or fewer minutes — the

hearing gets to its oversight. The inquisitors are usually limited to about six minutes apiece, and in those cases when a member chooses not to give a speech, questions usually come in one of two forms.

In the Senate Armed Services Committee, for example, questions will often be about defense spending in the questioner's home state (pork). When not about pork, the question is often read directly, or paraphrased, from a staff memo. Such mouthed inquiries alert the witness that the questioner literally does not know what he or she is talking about and the respondent can get away with vague, if not misleading, answers. It is an opportunity seized all too often. I have frequently listened to non-answers, waiting for an informed questioner to pounce, citing facts.

Such exchanges are extremely rare. Much more often, a congressional questioner will follow up with another scripted question, moving on, robotically, to another subject and a new opportunity for non-oversight.

Given the partisan stakes at issue with Katrina — and the opportunity for more calamity spending for members' home states — there is little reason to expect a departure from the familiar pattern of porking, posturing, and studied ignorance.

That leaves the other type of inquiry: the non-congressional commission. President George W. Bush has proposed one, but the Demo-

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crats, with reason, sense a white-wash. More adept is presidential hopeful Sen. Hilary Clinton's, D-N.Y., suggestion of a 9/11-type commission. The original 9/11 Commission wowed everybody with its adult behavior.

But, the 9/11 Commission was run by politicians, a former Republican governor and a retired Democratic congressman — a model to be avoided now. And, in hindsight, that commission's stature has shriveled. We now know it rejected, as inconsistent with its preferred findings, evidence that some of the

Sept. 11 terrorists were known to the Defense Department before the attacks. More troubling, we also know today the commission's staff director now serves as a senior adviser to the very same Condoleezza Rice, as secretary of state, that he was investigating when she was White House National Security Adviser.

There is only one right way to perform an investigation of the Katrina disaster: Eschew the politicians — from both parties. Find instead people with lesser political motives who also have real expertise. The last Clinton FEMA director, James Lee Whitt, and the

first Bush one, Joseph Albaugh, certainly have their personal political biases, but they both also performed in the job with enough competence to know a real answer from a dodge. Moreover, give them a professional staff, perhaps career professionals from FEMA's Inspector General, and bar that staff from ever accepting a political appointment. Then, perhaps we will have an inquiry we can trust. ■

*For 31 years, Winslow T. Wheeler worked for U.S. Senators from both parties and the Government Accountability Office.*

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Now that the U.S.-Soviet nuclear rivalry has become the side-show and nuclear proliferators have stolen the limelight, U.S. nuclear planners enjoy new license to conceive scenarios for using U.S. nukes against the rogue states and China. They have restored China as a major target of the U.S. strategic war plan, and are drawing up nuclear

strike options to neutralize the still uncertain nuclear threats posed by the rogue states. Preventive and preemptive nuclear strikes are among the military options that the Bush administration does not want to take off the table.

America's and the world's concern over Iran's future nukes and North Korea's virtual small arsenal of nukes is warranted, but the so-

lution to this proliferation will not be found in the U.S. nuclear planners' kitbag. The war gamers lost their credibility and perspective on the utility of U.S. nukes in dealing with nuclear rogue states over two decades ago. They are still living in that strange dreamland. We can only hope that enlightened national leadership will bring them down to Earth. ■

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this year, the United States actively lobbied the European Union not to lift its arms embargo on China, which would have allowed some weapons exports.

Unfortunately, the loosening of restrictions with India is only one example of a general policy shift that emerged after Sept. 11, 2001 that has seen the United States trade military assistance and arms sales for cooperation in the "global war on terror." Now, even pro-

posed U.S. nuclear cooperation with India, which has the potential to exacerbate tensions with Pakistan, are being discussed. This would have been unheard of prior to Sept. 11, 2001, as India had been illegible to receive U.S. weapons due to its 1998 nuclear testing.

As the world's largest arms exporter to both the developed and developing worlds, the United States has a particular duty to ensure that its weapons are used responsibly and by solely the intended end-us-

ers. As such, the United States must not only adhere to the letter of U.S. law, but also the spirit, and ensure that U.S. weapons do not go to undemocratic regimes, human rights abusers, or supporters of terrorism. The trends outlined in the CRS report reflect important foreign policy developments. The United States would be wise to ensure that its arms transfer policy reflect the realities of today's world and are managed with accountability and responsibility. ■



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