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A Potential Nuclear Threat?  
by Paul Weyrich

Does Osama bin Laden possess nuclear weapons? Has he smuggled these weapons into the United States? Does he have a plan to detonate these weapons in multiple American cities if Israel attacks Iran's nuclear facilities? Dr. Hugh Cort, President of the American Foundation for Counter-Terrorism Policy and Research, believes the answer to all of these questions is yes.

Cort has assembled a body of evidence which he claims supports the view that bin Laden has a plan for an "American Hiroshima" which will be implemented in the near future. He has sent this material to various U.S. officials, including Robert S. Mueller III, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Cort believes that the government is not doing enough to prevent an attack.

Much of his evidence centers around one Hamid Mir, a Pakistani journalist who has conducted the only interview of bin Laden after 9/11. Bin Laden told Mir that he had acquired 20 suitcase nuclear bombs from the former Soviet Union. Mir told Cort that bin Laden's men have smuggled these bombs into the United States. His men supposedly are waiting for bin Laden to give them the signal, then seven to ten American cities will be struck. If true it is little wonder that Iran's leader confidently predicts that the United States will be bombed back to the Stone Age.

Bin Laden supposedly has fulfilled Islamic law by warning the United States that an attack is coming and offering a truce - convert to Islam and you will not be attacked. Refusal to convert to Islam means that an attack against America is justified. Three weeks prior to 9/11 bin Laden warned that the United States would be attacked in an unprecedented way for its support of Israel.

Already bin Laden has called for all Muslims in the United States to leave. Instead of a mass exodus of Muslims from this country, new mosques are opening every few weeks. Muslim schools also are being established, which suggests that families plan to stay here for the foreseeable future. But Yossef Bodansky, director of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism from 1988 to 1998, has testified that bin Laden has obtained nuclear weapons. He told Congress that "Osama has recruited former Soviet Special Forces (SPETSNAZ) soldiers to teach al Qaeda how to maintain and operate the bombs."

Mir, by the way, has suggested that most of the nuclear weapons have been smuggled across the border from Mexico. Opponents of illegal immigration long have argued that they want the border monitored and closed for national security purposes. Proponents of illegal immigration have maintained that opposition to it is "racist." Clearly, opponents of illegal immigration have the better case, although if Mir is correct, the door may have been open too long. Christopher Ruddy, editor of Newsmax, interviewed Mueller, who told him that he is very concerned about bin Laden having nuclear weapons in the United States, so concerned that the FBI has surrounded mosques in ten American cities with nuclear radiation detectors. Cort quotes Steve Coll, President of New America Foundation, as stating that these detectors cannot sense enriched uranium when it is shielded in lead. If Islamists have such bombs, no doubt they are wrapped in lead.

Cort says that Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff does not have a plan in the event that these bombs are detonated. In such a scenario real deaths will come from radiation. If people know how to avoid radiation prior to an attack, there may be many survivors. If people can devise a radiation-proof shelter in their own homes to survive a detonation, two days later radiation is one, one-hundredth the strength of the initial blast. If people can spend three days in the shelter and then only make brief trips outside once a day, they can defeat radiation. But what credible source has warned people of the potential threat and how they can meet it?

Is all of this just alarmist talk? Has Cort missed something important which would nullify his answers? I have no idea. It seems more than reasonable that we proceed as if it is true. If it proves to be a false alarm, what have we lost? But if Cort's research has merit and we are prepared to handle such a situation, we could minimize its terrible impact. When I asked some U.S. officials why no one in the government is warning people, I was told "we don't want to unduly alarm people." Nonsense. I have great faith that the American people will do the right thing if properly informed. We did in the mid-1950s when told that the Soviet Union could start a nuclear war. We can do so again, but someone with credibility must tell Americans the truth.

About The Author

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*Paul M. Weyrich is Chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation.*

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