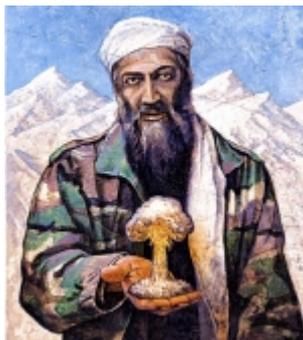


## CRUSADE MEDIA



### Al Qaeda has Nuclear Weapons

A month after September 11, senior Bush administration officials were told that an al Qaeda terrorist cell had control of a 10-kiloton atomic bomb from Russia and were plotting to detonate it in New York City. CIA director George Tenet told President Bush that the source, code-named "Dragonfire," had said the nuclear device was already on American soil. The briefing sent President Bush "through the roof" causing him to order his national security team to give nuclear terrorism priority over every other threat to America. Six months earlier the CIA's Counterterrorism Centre had picked up chatter in Al Qaeda channels about an "American Hiroshima".

Concerned that Al Qaeda could have smuggled a nuclear weapon into Washington as well, the president ordered Vice President Dick Cheney to leave the capital for an "undisclosed location," where he would remain for many weeks to follow. This was standard procedure to ensure "continuity of government" in case of a decapitation strike against the U.S. political leadership. Several hundred federal employees from more than a dozen government agencies joined the vice president at this secret site. The president also immediately dispatched NEST specialists (Nuclear Emergency Support Teams of scientists and engineers) to New York to search for the weapon.



After anxious weeks of investigation, including surreptitious tests for radioactive material in New York and other major cities, Dragonfire's report was found to be false. New York's mayor and police chief would not learn of the threat for another year. However the incident brought home to the American administration how volatile and potentially destructive this "war on terror" could be.

To date, the only confirmed case of attempted nuclear terrorism occurred in Russia on November 23, 1995, when Chechen separatists put a crude bomb containing 70 pounds of a mixture of cesium-137 and dynamite in Moscow's Ismailovsky Park. The rebels decided not to detonate this "dirty bomb," but instead informed a national television station to its location. This demonstration of the Chechen insurgents' capability to commit ruthless terror underscored their long-standing interest in all things nuclear. As early as 1992, Chechnya's first rebel president, Dzhokhar Dudayev, began planning for nuclear terrorism, including a specific initiative to hijack a Russian nuclear submarine from the Pacific Fleet in the Far East. The plan called for seven Slavic-looking Chechens to seize a submarine from the naval base near Vladivostok, attach explosive devices to the nuclear reactor section and to one of the nuclear-tipped missiles on board, and then demand withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya. After the plot was discovered, Russian authorities disparaged it, and yet it is ominous to note that the former chief of staff of the Chechen rebel army, Islam Khasukhanov, had once served as second-in-command of a Pacific Fleet nuclear submarine.

For Movsar Barayev, the leader of the rebel unit that took 800 hostages only a few blocks from the Kremlin, the Dubrovka Theater was his second-choice target. Initially, Barayev planned to seize the Kurchatov Institute, one of Russia's leading nuclear design centers, with 26 operating nuclear reactors and enough HEU to make thousands of nuclear weapons. Though far from optimal, the security at Kurchatov proved formidable enough for Barayev to pass up the nuclear facility for a softer target.

Chechen separatists have had a long-standing interest in acquiring nuclear weapons and material to use in their campaign against Russia. In addition to surveying Kurchatov, Chechen militants have conducted surveillance of the railway system and special trains designed for shipping nuclear weapons across Russia. They also succeeded in acquiring radioactive materials from a Grozny nuclear waste

plant in January 2000 and stealing radioactive metals – possibly including some plutonium – from the Volgodonskaya nuclear power station the southern region of Rostov between July 2001 and July 2002.

Al Qaeda and other Islamic extremist organizations are among Chechen militants' major sources of financial support. Al Qaeda operatives were alleged to have negotiated with Chechen separatists in Russia to buy a nuclear warhead, which the Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev claimed to have acquired from Russian arsenals. While the Chechens' target of choice for their first nuclear terrorist attack will surely be Moscow, if the Chechens are successful in acquiring several nuclear bombs, their Al Qaeda brethren would be likely consumers.

The collapse of the Soviet Union presented an enormous threat to nuclear security with the Soviet's ominous arsenal spread across four separate states. Efforts to transport weapons from Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine to Russia required significant speed and diplomatic muscle during a period of extreme political and economic chaos. The Soviet Ministry of Defense had to move 22,000 tactical nuclear weapons to Russia as the country was coming apart at the seams. Inflation had jumped over 2,000 percent, which fueled corruption and criminality throughout Russian society. In the slogan of that era, "Everything was for sale." In light of these realities, is it conceivable that all nuclear weapons were recovered without a single loss? In 1991, then U.S. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney observed, "If the Soviets do an excellent job at retaining control over their stockpile of nuclear weapons— let's assume they've got 25,000 to 30,000; that's a ballpark figure—and they are 99 percent successful, that would mean you could still have as many as 250 that they were not able to control." The bottom line today is summarized best by an American intelligence officer who spent many years tracking this issue. In his words: "We don't know with any confidence what has gone missing, and neither do they."

These bombs included suitcase nuclear devices; suitcase backpacks (yadernyi ranets), such as the Army's RA-155 and Navy's RA-115-01 (to be used underwater), which weighed as little as 65 pounds and could be detonated by one soldier in ten minutes, producing a yield of between 0.5 and 2 kilotons.



Reports of Bin Laden having obtained nuclear suitcases, first surfaced in 1998, in various international papers and magazines. In 1996 members of the Chechen Mafia purportedly sold twenty of these nuclear suitcases in Grozny to representatives of Osama bin Laden and the mujahadeen. For the weapons, bin Laden paid \$30 million in cash and two tons of heroin that had been refined in his laboratories in Afghanistan. The street value of the heroin was in excess of \$700 million.

In 1997, Boris Yeltsin's Assistant for National Security Affairs, General Alexander Lebed, acknowledged that 84 of some 132 such weapons were not accounted for in Russia. These weapons are miniature nuclear devices (0.1 to 1 kilotons), small enough to fit into a suitcase carried by a single individual. The Russian government reacted to Lebed's claim in classic Soviet style, combining wholesale denial with efforts to discredit the messenger. U.S. government sources have never succeeded in getting to the bottom of this matter.

It has not only been the various intelligence agencies of America, UK, Israel, Egypt and Pakistan finding this alarming intel, it also has come straight from Al Qaeda:

In an interview with Time magazine in December 1998, Bin Laden asserts that acquiring weapons of any type, including chemical and nuclear, is a Muslim "religious duty."

However in November 2001, Osama Bin Laden clearly spells it out and states that he is in possession of chemical and nuclear weapons. He states this in a special interview with Hamid Mir, the editor of Dawn newspaper, at an undisclosed location near Kabul. This was the first and up until now the last interview given by Osama to any journalist after the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington. The correspondent was taken blindfolded in a jeep from Kabul on the night of November 7 to a place where it was extremely cold and one could hear the sound of anti aircraft guns firing away. After a wait of some time, Osama arrived with about a dozen bodyguards and his number two, Dr Ayman Al-Zawahiri.

In the interview Bin Laden states "I wish to declare that if America used chemical or nuclear weapons against us, then we may retort with chemical and nuclear weapons. We have the weapons as deterrent". When Hamid Mir asks him he got the weapons, bin Laden tells him to go to the next question.



Mir recalled telling al-Zawahiri it was difficult to believe that Al Qaeda had nuclear weapons when the terror network didn't have the equipment to maintain or use them.

Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri laughed and he said 'Mr. Mir, if you have \$30 million, go to the black market in central Asia, contact any disgruntled Soviet scientist, and a lot of ... smart briefcase bombs are available'. "They have contacted us, we sent our people to Moscow, to Tashkent, to other central Asian states and they negotiated, and we purchased some suitcase bombs," Mir quoted al-Zawahiri as saying.

After the 911 attacks on America some Islamic clerics criticized bin Laden for not issuing a warning to America prior to the attacks and an offer of convert to Islam. However, since then bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri have issued various warnings and offers of truces to both the US and its European allies.

Consider the religious fatwa titled "A Treatise on the Legal Status of Using Weapons of Mass Destruction Against Infidels" that Osama bin Laden secured from Shaykh Nasir bin Hamd al-Fahd, a young and prominent Saudi cleric justifying the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) against Americans, in May 2003:

"Anyone who considers America's aggressions against Muslims and their lands during the past decades will conclude that striking her is permissible on the basis of the rule of treating one as one has been treated. No other argument need be mentioned. Some brothers have totaled the number of Muslims killed directly or indirectly by their weapons and come up with a figure of nearly ten million....If a bomb that killed ten million of them and burned as much of their land as they have burned Muslim land was dropped on them, it would be permissible, with no need to mention any other argument. We might need other arguments if we wanted to annihilate more than this number of them".

Recently in January 2006 in an audio tape, directed to the American population, bin Laden said ": "The new operations of al-Qaeda has not happened not because we could not penetrate the security measures. It is being prepared and you'll see it in your homeland very soon." But the voice on the tape, also offered a truce: "We do not mind establishing a long-term truce between us and you."

In August 2005 Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri issued a video. In it he stated: "O nations of the crusade alliance, we proposed that you at least stop your aggression against the Muslims. The Lion of Islam, mujahid Sheikh Osama bin Laden, may God preserve him, offered you a truce until you leave the Land of Islam. Has Sheikh Osama bin Laden not informed you that you will not dream of security until we live it in reality in Palestine and before all infidel armies leave the land of Muhammad, may peace be upon him [= Saudi Arabia]? You, however, shed rivers of blood in our land so we exploded volcanoes of anger in your land. Our message to you is crystal clear: Your salvation will only come in your withdrawal from our land, in stopping the robbing of our oil and resources, and in stopping your support for the corrupt and corrupting leaders. Those who collaborated with America in Iraq and Afghanistan will, God willing, bear the consequences of this collaboration soon."

Zawahiri put special emphasis on the growing threats to the United States. "What you have seen, O Americans, in New York and Washington and the losses you are having in Afghanistan and Iraq, in spite of all the media blackout, are only the losses of the initial clashes. If you continue the same policy of aggression against Muslims, God willing, you will see the horror what will make you forget what you had seen in Vietnam," he warned.

In April 2006 bin Laden issued a further audio tape. In it the speaker on the tape said that along with their governments, the people of the West bear responsibility for what he called a "Zionist-crusader war against Islam". He seems to be gearing the West for another attack in which civilians will be as much a target as their governments - more so than the 911 attacks.

Bin Laden is quoted as saying: "The war is a responsibility shared between the people and the governments. The war goes on and the people are renewing their allegiance to its rulers and masters," he said. "They send their sons to armies to fight us and they continue their financial and moral support while our countries are burned and our houses are bombed and our people are killed." He said that the decision by some Western powers to cut funding to the Palestinian government since the militant group Hamas won elections there was further proof of this anti-Islamic campaign.

It has been reported that Mir met with an Egyptian engineer recently, who had lost an eye after one of bin Laden's nuclear tests in Kunar, Afghanistan. The Pakistani journalist said that the encounter with the engineer greatly



disturbed and depressed him since it provided further assurance that a nuclear nightmare for America is about to dawn.

Mir believes that an "American Hiroshima" will occur as soon as the U.S. launches an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. "Al-Qaeda and Iran," he says, "have a long, secret relationship."

That relationship dates back to June 21, 1996, when bin Laden attended a terror summit in Tehran. The gathering attracted terror leaders from various places throughout the world, including Ramadan Shallah (the Palestinian Islamic Jihad), Ahmad Salah (Egyptian Islamic Jihad), Imad al-Alami and Mustafa al-Liddawi (HAMAS), Ahmad Jibril (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), Abdallah Ocalan (the Kurdish People Party), Muhammad Ali Ahmad (al Qaeda), and Imad Mugniyah (Hezbollah). The summit resulted in the creation of the "Committee of Three" that would meet on a regular basis for the "coordination, planning, and execution of attacks" against the United States and Israel. The committee members were Ahmad Salah, Imad Mugniyah and bin Laden.

Mir's position that al-Qaeda's nuclear weapons may have already been forward deployed to the United States confirms the report of Sharif al-Masri, a key al-Qaida operative who was arrested in Pakistan in November 2000.

Al Masri, an Egyptian national with ties to al-Zawahiri, said that al-Qaeda had made arrangements to smuggle nuclear weapons and supplies to Mexico. From Mexico, he said, the weapons were to be transported across the border and into the United States with the help of a Latino street gang.

Mir also maintains that numerous sleeper agents are in place in major cities throughout the United States to prepare for the nuclear holocaust. Many of these agents, he says, are Algerians and Chechens who obtained European passports and are posing as Christian and Jews.

He further says that many of these agents have been in the United States since bin Laden's issuance of his "Declaration of War on Americans Occupying the Country of the Two Holy Places." That fatwa was issued Aug. 23, 1996