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## THE PAKISTANI-NORTH KOREAN WMD AXIS

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**by B. Raman**

On March 24, 2003, the USA imposed against the A.Q.Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) of the Pakistan Government and the Changgwang Sinyong Corporation of the North Korean Government two-year sanctions, which would debar them from any trade or technological exchanges with governmental and non-governmental entities in the USA. The sanctions were imposed as a penalty for their clandestine missile supply relationship with each other.

2. It would seem that the sanctions are also applicable against the State of North Korea, but not against the State of Pakistan, despite the fact that the KRL is owned and run by the State of Pakistan and is managed by its Armed Forces. In the absence of sanctions against the State, those only against the KRL are just a fraud on public opinion. Since the KRL does not have any exchanges with entities in the USA, they would have no effect on its continued violations of regulations relating to the proliferation of missiles and related technology. In the past too, the KRL had been the subject of similar sanctions by the USA twice, which it ignored with impunity.

3. Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, told the AFP on April 1, 2003: "There is no evidence about what the US is saying. We have already told them (US) that if they have any evidence... against KRL, they should bring it forward." Initial agency reports, as cited in the "Dawn" of Karachi of April 2, 2003, quoted Richard Boucher, US State Department spokesman, as stating that the sanctions were imposed because of the KRL's "contributions" to efforts by an unnamed foreign "country, person or entity of proliferation concern" to develop weapons of mass destruction and that sanctions had also been slapped on North Korea for exporting missile technology.

4. Sheikh Rashid, Pakistan's Information Minister, told the AFP: "Pakistan has neither imported nor exported this sensitive (uranium enrichment) technology. What we have indigenously developed is solely for our defence." He added that President Pervez Musharraf had taken strong exception to the US sanctions during a telephonic conversation with Colin Powell, the US Secretary of State, on March 31,

2003. According to Rashid, Musharraf accused the United States of "cold-shouldering a friend."

5. Subsequently, Philip Reeker of the State Department clarified in Washington DC on April 2, 2003, that the US had imposed penalties on Pakistan because of "missile-related transfer" from North Korea, but these had nothing to do with the transfer of nuclear-related material from Pakistan to North Korea. In an Islamabad datelined report, the "Dawn" of April 3, 2003, stated as follows: "The US for the first time on Wednesday (April 2, 2003) explicitly accused Pakistan and North Korea of missile-related trade, but said it was unable to substantiate reports of nuclear technology transfers. A State Department statement received here said North Korea had exported missile technology to the A. Q. Khan Research Laboratories (KRL). The export prompted the US to slap trade sanctions on KRL and the North Korean missile marketing entity, Changgwang Sinyong Corporation, on March 24, spokesman Philip Reeker said in the statement. "Changgwang Sinyong Corporation transferred missile-related technology to KRL," Mr Reeker said, without specifying when. "The United States made a determination to impose penalties on both Changgwang Sinyong Corporation and KRL as a result of this specific missile-related transfer. " KRL and the North Korean firm have been banned from trade with US firms under the sanctions imposed on March 24, but only formally announced by the US on Monday (March 31, 2003)."

6. The "Dawn" also quoted Japan's "Sankei Shimbun" newspaper as reporting on April 2, 2003, that US satellites and spy networks detected North Korean exports of some 10 Scud B missiles to Pakistan during March, 2003. However, the "Washington Times" has reported that the sanctions related to a missile transaction, which ended in August, 2002. It quoted unnamed US officials as "disclosing" that American-made C-130 aircraft were used to transport the missiles to Pakistan. It added: "This is a very serious matter," a senior administration official said. "We are not talking about missile technology or components but full-fledged No-Dong missiles that can deliver nuclear weapons — and they used aircraft we gave them to bring the missiles home."

7. Pointing out that the nuclear-capable missiles had a range of up to 900 miles and could reach virtually every major Indian city, the paper cited US officials as stating that the transfer took place with the knowledge of the highest levels of the Pakistani Government. It further said: "Another official said the transfers occurred "during a period of time ending in August, and we've been in close contact with the Pakistani Government since November, urging it to stop this behavior. " Earlier reports, including a CIA document obtained by The Washington Times last year, suggested North Korea's missile-related transfers to Pakistan included equipment, components, materials and technical expertise but not entire missiles. Washington has also imposed two-year Category 1 missile sanctions against North Korea, through the state-owned Changgwang Sinyong Corp., under the congressional Arms Export Control Act, one official said. "That has no huge practical impact because there is no trade between the United States and North Korea, but it's an important symbolic act that shows our focus on the North's proliferation behavior and also tells the buyers how serious we are about this," he said.

8. According to the paper, because the end-user of the missile purchase cannot be sanctioned under the Arms Export Control Act, known as the missile law, the penalty against the Pakistani company was imposed by a State Department executive order signed by John Bolton, Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

9. "The Washington Times" further said: "While the Bush administration has discussed the issue with authorities in Islamabad, it has not approached North Korea about it," the official said. A senior State Department official said Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf about the sanctions in a telephone conversation Tuesday (April 1, 2003). The Secretary said that we have to follow our laws, but our bilateral relationship remains strong," the official said. "I think the Pakistanis understand that we are doing what is necessary legally and that this is not a political step."

10. According to the paper, U.S. officials said what aggravated the situation in the No-Dong transfer was the use of American-made planes for North Korean proliferation purposes. "The C-130 aircraft belong to the Pakistani Government, which means that the Pakistani Air Force signed off on the operation," the officials were quoted as saying.

11. The Changgwang Sinyong Corporation had been sanctioned by Washington in the past too. In June, 1996, sanctions were imposed against it for supplying missiles and related technologies to Iran. In August, 2002, it was punished for a missile transfer to Yemen; in June 2001, for selling chemical-weapons materials and missile engines to Iran; and in April 2000, for missile-technology sales to Syria. In December, 2002, two Spanish warships seized a North Korean Scud missile shipment destined for Yemen on behalf of the United States. But Washington allowed the delivery to pass after the Yemeni Government promised the missiles were only for defense and that it would not purchase arms from Pyongyang again.

12. Pakistan's arms supply relationship with North Korea dates back to 1971 when the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the then Foreign Minister under the late Gen. Yahya Khan, visited Pyongyang and sought North Korean arms supplies to strengthen the Pakistani Armed Forces in the face of a looming war with India. Pakistan then did not have diplomatic relations with North Korea. However, the visit led to the signing of an agreement on September 18, 1971, 10 weeks before the outbreak of the war with India, for the supply of North Korean-made conventional weapons to Pakistan. Under another agreement signed the same day, the two countries agreed to set up mutual consular relations, which were upgraded to full-fledged diplomatic relations on November 9, 1972.

13. Under the agreement of September 18, 1971, Pakistan received from North Korea, in return for payment in US dollars, many shipments of items such as rocket launchers, ammunition etc. In the 1980s, Pakistan also acted as an intermediary in facilitating arms supply agreements concluded by Pyongyang with Libya and Iran. During the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, North Korea became a principal supplier of weapons to Iran, which was the target of an arms embargo imposed by the Western countries. To escape detection by the Western intelligence agencies, North Korean arms shipments meant for Iran used to be received by sea at Karachi and from there transported in Pakistani trucks to Iran across Balochistan. Amongst the supplies made by North Korea to Iran via Karachi were over 100 Scud B (known as the Hwasong 5 in North Korea) ballistic missiles and equipment for the assembly, maintenance and ultimate production of these

missiles in Iranian territory.

14. In this transaction, Pakistan played a double game. On the one hand, the then ruling military regime of the late Zia-ul-Haq collaborated with the USA's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Iraqi intelligence in destabilisation operations directed at the Sunni Balochis living on the Iranian side of the border. At the same time, it clandestinely allowed the transport by road of North Korean arms and ammunition meant for use by the Iranian Army against the Iraqis. Pakistani army officers were also sent to Libya to help in the training of Libyan Army officers in the use and maintenance of North Korean weaponry.

15. During the Zia regime, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and its North Korean counterpart collaborated closely for the clandestine acquisition of nuclear and missile-related equipment and technology from the then West Germany and other Western countries. Since North Korea did not have either a presence or the funds and other capability to be able to indulge in clandestine procurement from the West, it gave lists of its requirements to the ISI, which procured them and passed them on.

16. This co-operation between the two countries, the foundation for which was laid by Z. A. Bhutto, was further strengthened during the two tenures of Mrs. Benazir Bhutto as the Prime Minister (1988-90 and 1993-96). It was during this time that Pakistan failed in its efforts to develop an indigenous missile production capability (the Hatf series) and it sought Chinese and North Korean supplies of missiles as well as technology for their production in Pakistan. During her second tenure, Benazir visited Pyongyang during which the scope of the arms supply agreement concluded when her father was the Foreign Minister was expanded to include co-operation in the nuclear and missile fields---including the training of the scientists and engineers of the KRL in North Korea, the training of North Korean scientists and engineers in the Pakistani uranium enrichment plant at Kahuta and the supply of the No-Dong missiles and the related technology to Pakistan.

17. Earlier, during the first tenure (1990-93) of Nawaz Sharif as the Prime Minister, Lt. Gen. Javed Nasir, the Director-General of the ISI, visited Pyongyang to sign a secret agreement with the North Korean intelligence for the joint production through reverse engineering of the US-made, shoulder-fired Stinger missiles and their batteries. Some of the missiles in the stock of the Pakistani army were given to the North Korean intelligence for this purpose. The Iranian intelligence agreed to fund this project. It is not known whether this project succeeded in producing an imitated version of the Stingers and their batteries. The ISI was particularly interested in the batteries because it was unable to use a large number of Stinger missiles in its stocks since the life-period of the batteries supplied by the USA before 1988 to enable the use of these missiles against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan had expired.

18. Throughout the 1990s, whoever was at the helm in Islamabad, the trilateral co-operation involving Pakistan, Iran and North Korea in the development and production of the Scud—C (called Hwasong 6 in North Korea) and the No-Dong missiles continued without interruption despite Teheran's anger against Pakistan for backing the Taliban and for failing to prevent the periodic massacre of Pakistani Shias and Iranian nationals by the Sunni extremist Sipah-e-Sahaba, Pakistan, and its militant wing, the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LEJ).

19. During 1992, when Nawaz Sharif was the Prime Minister, a team of Pakistani scientists and engineers had visited North Korea's missile development centre, reportedly for a joint examination of some technical problems encountered by North Korea in the development of the

No-Dong. The same year also saw a visit by Kim Yong-nam, the then North Korean Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, to Syria, Iran and Pakistan in July-August. Pakistani and Iranian scientists and engineers visited North Korea in May, 1993, to witness the launching of one No-Dong and three Scud missiles (model not known).

20. The visit of Benazir to Beijing and Pyongyang in December, 1993, was followed by the visits of a number of North Korean personalities to Pakistan in 1994-95 to discuss bilateral nuclear and missile co-operation. Important amongst these visits were:

- \* During April, 1994, Pak Chung-kuk, deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly, visited Iran and Pakistan at the head of a team of officials of the North Korean Foreign Ministry and the nuclear and missile establishment.

- \* During September, 1994, Choe Hui-chong, Chairman of the State Commission of Science and Technology, visited Pakistan at the head of a team of North Korean nuclear and missile experts.

- \* During November 1995, a delegation of North Korean military officers and nuclear and missile experts headed by Choe Kwang, Vice Chairman of the National Defense Commission, Minister of the People's Armed Forces, and Marshal of the Korean People's Army, visited Pakistan. The delegation met senior officials of the Armed Forces and visited Pakistan's nuclear and missile establishments, including the KRL. The team included senior officials of the Fourth Machine Industry Bureau of the Second Economic Committee and the Changgwang Sinyong Corporation (also known as the North Korea Mining Development Trading Corporation). During the visit, the KRL and the Changgwang Sinyong Corporation signed an agreement for the supply to Pakistan of the No-Dong missiles as well as fuel tanks and rocket engines. The agreement also provided for the stationing of North Korean missile experts in the KRL for the training of their Pakistani counterparts in the use and maintenance of the missiles supplied by North Korea and for the supply and development of mobile erector launchers for the missiles.

21. These visits contributed to the speeding up of Pakistan's missile programme and culminated in the firing of the so-called Ghauri missile by the KRL on April 6, 1998, which was projected by Pakistan as its own indigenously-developed missile. Despite this, the US State Department imposed two-year sanctions against the KRL and the Changgwang Sinyong Corporation on April 24, 1998, which expired on April 23, 2000. The KRL had earlier been the subject of similar sanctions imposed by the State Department in August 1993 for its clandestine procurement of the M-11 missiles from China.

22. Thus, the sanctions imposed on March 24, 2003, are the third against the KRL. These sanctions have had no effect either on Pakistan or North Korea. The KRL and the North Korean Corporation are State-owned entities, run and managed by officers of the Armed Forces of the two countries. Pakistan had used a US-supplied aircraft of its Air Force for transporting the missiles to Pakistan. The missiles and other

weapons sent by North Korea to Iran in the 1980s had transited through Pakistani territory, escorted by the Pakistan Army. Pakistan and North Korea have a joint project for the reverse engineering of the US-made Stingers. North Korean nuclear scientists witnessed Pakistan's Chagai nuclear tests of May, 1998. Pakistan has been helping North Korea in the development of its uranium enrichment facility. The two countries have been training each other's nuclear and missile scientists in their respective establishments. In return for the North Korean assistance, Pakistan had diverted to North Korea wheat purchased from the USA and Australia and had been paying it from its huge dollar reserves built up after 9/11, thereby enabling Pyongyang to withstand the economic boycott by the West. To hoodwink the US intelligence, Pakistan had got transported some of the Chinese as well as North Korean missiles by road via the Karakoram Highway. Pakistan's diplomatic mission in Pyongyang is generally headed and staffed by serving or retired army officers, who had previously served in the clandestine nuclear and missile procurement set-up of the ISI. The latest instance in this regard is Maj.Gen. (retd) Fazle Ghafoor.

23. In spite of all this, for the US to pretend as if the repeated violations of nuclear and missile related regulations by Pakistan were the misdeeds of errant individual entities for which the State cannot be held responsible shows the extent to which it is prepared to close its eyes to what Pakistan has been doing. If there is one country in the world which has been systematically violating with impunity all regulations relating to nuclear and missile proliferation and from which there is a real danger of leakage of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related technologies to pan-Islamic terrorists, that is Pakistan. The US double standards in this matter are evident from the alacrity and vigour with which it has acted against Iraq despite the lack of any credible evidence against it and the care with which it protects the regime in Pakistan, despite all the evidence available against it.

*(The writer is Additional Secretary (retd), Cabinet Secretariat, Govt. of India, and, presently, Director, Institute For Topical Studies, Chennai, and Convenor, Advisory Committee, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Chennai Chapter. E-Mail: [corde@vsnl.com](mailto:corde@vsnl.com) [1] )*

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