Speculations apart, Dr. A.Q. Khan’s change of positioning from the chairmanship of Khan Research Laboratories (KRL, Kahuta) to the currently held advisory role to the government may be said to be the result of a sustained Pakistani strategy of nuclear and scientific developments in the country. Strangely invoked silence by the Musharraf government on Dr Khan’s role in the future of Pakistan’s nuclear programme needs a little more attention than it has received.

Dr. Khan himself had wished for an advisory role much before the changes brought by Musharraf in March 2001 at key positions in country’s nuclear establishments. This was well indicated through an interview that was published in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, September 1993. Dr. Khan replied to a question by Simon Henderson - “You are 57 years old. When are you going to retire?” as, “Every now and again I let it be known to the government that I would like to retire as soon as possible, and I would be the happiest man if they say tomorrow that I am a free man and I can go home.” At the same time, Dr. Khan had expressed his desire that “I would love to be associated in some way with science and technology. If after retirement they want to keep me involved in some advisory capacity, I would love to do that.” ¹

By the year 1993 Dr. Khan would have had adequate clarity of Pakistan’s potential nuclear power and the role of Islamic Bomb in international affairs. Dr. Khan for decades has been acting as the key strategist of nuclear development programme in the country and so it stands to reason that he would also have a definitive advisory vision and skill for the years to come. After achieving the appellation of father of the Islamic bomb, Dr. Khan might be contemplating to provide his expertise to the Islamic states in general and the “friends in need” of Pakistan in particular.
Dr. Khan was quoted saying in the 1980s, as “All Western countries, including Israel, are not only the enemies of Pakistan but in fact of Islam. Had any other Muslim country instead of Pakistan made this progress, they would have conducted the same poisonous propaganda about it. The examples of Iraq and Libya are before you.”  

When Pervez Musharraf asked Dr. A.Q. Khan to leave the chairmanship of Kahuta atomic complex and made him his scientific adviser, media reported reluctance on Dr. Khan’s side from assuming the new post. During this period of change in deciding Dr. Khan’s role, speculations were high that A.Q. Khan was preparing to hire out his services to other Islamic countries. Khan had even hinted that that could be as one of his options (including social work).

Dr. Khan’s removal from KRL, remains unexplained of specific reason or purpose. It cannot be ruled out that having utilised the fullest of Dr. Khan’s skill and scientific knowledge of centrifuge technology for uranium route to Pakistan’s nuclear weapons, Musharraf might be looking for some other placement for him. If it was too exposed of Dr. Khan’s hobnobbing with potential nuclear weapons proliferators, specially with Taleban, Iraq, North Korea and Iran, US pressure would have been mounting high on the Pakistani government. Musharraf might have looked for alternative position of Dr. Khan from where the scientist could pursue military objectives under the cover of civil society programmes. The new post of Dr. Khan would provide easy access to the scientist for the international visitors and vice-a-versa.

Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability acquisitions may be said to be based on stolen, borrowed or bought means. The chief architect of Pakistan’s nuclear bomb, Dr. A.Q. Khan, has long been playing a pivotal role in helping Pakistan to indulge in activities that not only have violated international commitments but also showed defiance to the nonproliferation regimes. The murky deals of the scientific community in and outside Pakistan that had started in 1970s remain the cause of concern even today, from the days of Dr. A.Q. Khan to Dr. Bashiruddin Mehmood to the many hidden unknowns.

**The Khan Factor of Pakistan:**

Dr A.Q. Khan is the only Pakistani to have received the highest civilian award of “Nishan-I-Imtiaz”(NI) twice -in 1996 and 1998. He also has received the honour of Hilal-I-Imtiaz. (HI). Yet, his critics call him differently, such as “Evil Scientist”, “Rogue Scientist”, “Horrible Example” etc.

Explaining the reasons behind displacement of Dr. Khan from the Chairmanship of KRL, Mr. Musharraf highlighted few points in the speech at a dinner hosted in his honour, *(i)* **Nations cannot afford to sit on their laurels. Success must be reinforced. New ideas and new blood must continue to be injected,** *(ii)* **I always believe that the time to make a transition is when you are on top. I also believe that transition must be effected smoothly so that there is no dislocation of objectives,** and *(iii)* **Giving any other colour or meaning to my decision is unfair.**
Mr. Musharraf tried to convince the confused domestic audience with utmost caution without celebrations for the new change. At the same time, the Pakistani President staged a gimmick by putting the same old wine in a new bottle. The reality behind the whole episode is yet to emerge on the ground. Is it not surprising that Dr. Khan, who is known for his outspoken character, opted to underplay in a mysterious way and accepted the advisory role, as Special Adviser to the Chief Executive on Strategic and KRL?

Besides being chairman of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) science and technology panel, chairman of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences, member, board of governors of Hamdard university, Sir Syed University (Dubai), International Islamic University and honorary member of the Korean Academy of Science and Technology, Dr. Khan has been overseeing the development of two important technical institutions in Pakistan – (i) A.Q. Khan Institute of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering at the Karachi University campus with an estimated cost of Rs. 250 million, and (ii) Gulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering and Technology.

No matter how the foreign aid gets utilized in specified objectives in Pakistan, Dr. Khan has been a great fundraiser for the country from the Gulf States for education and health sectors. It may be recalled that to sustain the US imposed sanctions in 1980s and 1990s, Pakistan had received considerable financial support from the Arab states, mainly Saudi Arabia and Libya. Despite international criticism, to continue with the clandestine efforts for nuclear weapons development, Dr. Khan had adroitly played a vital role in capitalising his international contacts both in terms of technology and finance.

Instead of maintaining restraint in unlawful acts, Dr. A.Q. Khan was quoted boasting his involvement in the nuclear development programme of Pakistan as – “A.Q. Khan says Western governments repeatedly tried to prevent Pakistan from developing a nuclear weapon capability, but they were foiled by the greed of their own companies: “Many suppliers approached us with the details of the machinery and with figures and numbers of instruments and materials ... In the true sense of the word, they begged us to purchase their goods. And for the first time the truth of the saying...... We purchased whatever we required.”

With the growing homogeneity of strong Pan Islamic affiliations worldwide, scientists like Dr. Khan with considerable leaning for the Islamic bomb, Pakistan may make use of him in enabling Islamabad with more influential say in the Islamic world for spreading of nuclear know-how to other nuclear aspirants. No doubt, Pakistan has long been benefited with strategic partnership with the US and so with the US’s allies. To face a potential adversarial circumstance of any opposition or denial of undue privileges by these supporters of past, Islamabad might be developing secondary channels of sympathizers by utilizing the services of the brains behind its nuclear weapons programme and so helping both the Islamic and non-Islamic entities to acquire nuclear capability. In this context, person like Dr. Khan might be of great utility to Musharraf.

Dr. A.Q. Khan, the so-called father of Pakistan's nuclear bomb, who is alleged to have stolen the design and engineering plans for gas centrifuges from Netherlands, is said to have visited several countries both Islamic and non-Islamic. Little is known of the details of the scientist’s activities during foreign visits. If the purpose of his tours implied sharing of missile and nuclear know-how between states, it requires intelligent attention of the world community. His hobnobbing with the
institutions and individuals may be said to be benefiting those who might be interested in the nuclear expertise of the scientists, materials, equipments and technology available in Pakistan. If Dr. Khan's interaction with the scientists of Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Libya remains similar to the kinds of his reported visits to North Korea, norms of the nonproliferation regimes can be said to have been more brazenly violated.

While the aspirations of few Islamic countries to acquire nuclear weapons are wedded to the ideas in the realm of “Islamic Bomb”, the motivation of the so called jehadis for the weapons of mass destruction components and know-how reflect pertinently on the rise of nuclear terror throughout the world. The challenges of nonproliferation advocates do not stop here only and so require attention in addition to these two assumed realities.

The latest expose, though no revelation for US and few others, Pakistan-North Korea barter arrangement in the area of non-conventional military capabilities recognises facts far beyond the topics related to Islamic affiliations for the bomb and the secret facilitators of weapons of mass destruction worldwide. The principal motive of secret proliferators may be seen as expansion of unstable world security environment with multiplicity of asymmetric threats.

The movement of the brains behind Pakistan’s nuclear and missile capability if not closely examined and controlled in time, the technological know-how of weapons of mass destruction may covertly transcend several national boundaries. The flagrant nonconformity of various kinds of transborder movements of men and materials originating from Pakistan poses a serious threat of weapons of mass destruction falling into the wrong hands. The tireless task that A.Q. Khan had assumed to nuclearise the Islamic republic some three decades ago still keeps rolling in the face of international condemnation for Pakistan’s nuclear blackmailing.

The intent of active participation by Dr Khan in the affairs of Pakistan may be measured through what he had expressed in 2001, in an interview to Zeba Khan of Human Development Foundation, Schaumburg. Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan replied on a question of his retirement as following: “I can't ever retire, if I quit government work I will do social work full time. Charity is the family business.........I keep busy in other ways too not just charity, I coordinate a number of scientific projects, I'm working on industrial revival and establishment, I'm on the boards of so many Universities. I've built a Polytechnic Institute in Mianwali, and now I'm building a Genetic Engineering Institute in Karachi, which I believe will be the best in all of Asia.”

So in the near future, Dr. Khan is not to retire from his active participation for Pakistan as his country. For the critics who see him as an “evil scientist", Dr. Khan says,” Unfortunately, my adversaries belong to a category of people who did not even spare our god, our prophets and our most honest and sincere leaders. They dislike me and accuse me of all kinds of unsubstantiated and fabricated lies because I disturbed all their strategic plans, the balance of power and blackmailing potential in this part of the world. I am not a madman or a nut.”

The reality of being called an “evil scientist" lies somewhere in between “his wishes" for Pakistan’s reaching new heights of strategic balance
in international affairs and “the means” that Dr. Khan has been choosing to achieve his mission.

**Brief Background of Dr. A.Q. Khan:**

Dr. A. Q Khan was born in 1936 in Bhopal (present state of Madhya Pradesh in India) in a teacher’s family. Before migrating to Karachi in 1952 he remained in India even after the creation of Pakistan in 1947. After finishing study at school in Karachi, he obtained the degree of Bachelor of Science in 1960 from the University of Karachi. Khan went to Europe in 1961. First, he attended the Technische Universität of West Berlin. He received a Master of Science degree in metallurgical engineering in 1967 from Delft Technological University of Leuven, Belgium. Khan. Then he received his Ph.D. degree in metallurgy from the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium in 1972.

In May 1972 Khan went to work for the Physical Dynamics Research Laboratory (FDO), a subsidiary of Verenigde Machine-Fabrieken, in Amsterdam. FDO was a subcontractor to Ultra-Centrifuge Nederland (UCN) - the Dutch partner of the tri-national European uranium enrichment centrifuge consortium URENCO, made up of Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands.

It is said that only within a week of starting with FDO A. Q. Khan was sent to the UCN enrichment facility in Almelo, Netherlands. The procedure of transmittal of security paperwork was ignored by both FDO and UCN, because Khan was not cleared to visit the UCN facility, though it was assumed that he would do so repeatedly during his employment.

In Almelo Dr. Khan was assigned with translating highly classified technical documents dealing with the centrifuges in detail. Against the normal norms, during his period of job he often took the documents home with FDO’s consent. For almost two years Khan worked with two early centrifuge designs, the CNOR and SNOR machines. In late 1974 UCN put Khan on the duty of translating highly classified design documents for two advanced German machines, the G-1 and G-2. These two designs were supposed to be the most sophisticated industrial enrichment technology in the world at the time.

In January 1976, Khan and his family suddenly left for Pakistan from Holland. Dr. Khan’s wife, reportedly, wrote back to her neighbors in Holland that they were on vacation and that her husband had fallen ill. Later, Dr. Khan sent his letter of resignation to FDO, to be effective from March 1976.

The technical know-how acquired from Delft Technological University of Leuven, Belgium could have firmly led Dr. Khan to readily accept the invitation from his parent country to initially work under the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), headed by Munir Ahmad Khan. Due to some internal bickering, the then Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave Khan autonomous control of the uranium enrichment project, reporting directly to the Prime Minister's office, an arrangement that continues till today. On 31 July 1976 A.Q. Khan founded Engineering Research Laboratories (ERL), with the exclusive task of development of Uranium Enrichment Plant.
ERL was renamed by the then President of Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haq on May 1, 1981 as Dr Abdul Quadeer Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) with Dr. Khan as its Chairman. He retired from the Chairmanship of KRL on March 30, 2001 and assumed the role of adviser to the chief executive, Mr. Pervez Musharraf. The official designation for his new role is “Special Adviser to the Chief Executive on Strategic and KRL (Khan Research Laboratories) Affairs”.

Dr. Khan took advantage of his experience of many years of working on the projects in Europe and his contacts there with various manufacturing firms, but denied engaging in nuclear espionage for which a court in Amsterdam sentenced him in absentia in 1983 to four years in prison. An appeals court two years later upheld his appeal against the conviction and quashed the sentence for failure to properly deliver summons to him.

**Khan’s imperious security arrangement:**

To maintain secrecy of what Dr. Khan was pursuing for the acquisition of nuclear capability to Pakistan there have been various reports of unsolved mysteries. As late as in 2001, it was reported that Kim Sa-nae, wife of a senior DPRK diplomat, was shot dead on June 9, 1998 in Islamabad just a week after Pakistan’s first nuclear tests. Her husband Kang Thae-yun - who as economic counselor in the embassy worked for Changgwang Sinyong (CSC) - disappeared soon afterwards. Both were close to A.Q. Khan. The mystery remains unsolved, but the suspicion is that either or both had planned to defect and reveal all.

For quite long years there have been a number of incidents that include encounters between foreigners and the heavy-handed security management for Khan and KRL. In late July 1979, unidentified men stopped and beat severely the French Ambassador and his First Secretary as they were driving by Khan’s laboratories in Kahuta. A few weeks later in August a journalist for the *Financial Times* named Chris Sherwell who while trying to locate Khan’s house to conduct an interview in Islamabad was beaten up and then arrested and charged on fictitious crimes, forcing him to leave the country. Later police detained a British diplomat’s son after losing his way in the Islamabad district that houses Khan.

**Suspected deeds of Dr. Khan:**
Saudis might be trying to purchase nukes in which Dr. Khan was instrumental to the deal, as reported by The Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. Through a report published on August 3, 1999 in the Guardian, the Bulletin quoted a senior British official expressing "concern" that Saudi Arabia might be seeking to buy nuclear weapons. Suspicions were first raised as early as in May 1999, when Saudi Defense Minister Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz toured Pakistan's secret nuclear facilities. Prince Sultan reportedly had visited a uranium enrichment plant and missile production facility, and was briefed by A.Q. Khan, the chief architect of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. The intelligence report also mentioned Western officials who maintained that Saudi Arabia might have agreed to finance the program as well.

The latest report of Pakistan's clandestine support to North Korean secret uranium enrichment programme has a lot to do with Dr. Khan's involvement into the unlawful exchange of scientists, equipments, and technology between the two countries. Close at the Chagai Hills tests of May 1998, speculation is that one of the devices tested was of/for (?) North Korea.

Though the US was aware of the past connections between North Korea and Pakistan, the Bush administration is not speaking much on the issue. Various important aspects are getting highlighted in different academic, intelligence and media reports. It is widely acknowledged that Dr. Khan brokered the North Korean deal. The NBC News report mentions that Dr. Khan visited North Korea in the late 1990s. The report quoted a reliable source outside the government saying that the eminent scientist provided "information and technology" to the North Koreans and also hosted a delegation from Pyongyang in Pakistan. The Director of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, Joseph Cirincione, has been frequently quoted in media for his assertion that in the last four years before retirement he (Dr. Khan) made 12 separate trips to Pyongyang.

In a press conference on November 28, 2001, when asked to comment on a report that Iran was going to be a nuclear power and that scientist Dr. A.Q. Khan had visited Iran secretly, the foreign office spokesman refuted the report. The Pakistani spokesman said that "Dr. A.Q. Khan has never in his life visited Iran, even as a tourist." Such denials from Pakistan are yet to be closely verified.

Literature on military affairs explains that in late 1986 and early 1987, Iran and Pakistan began to cooperate on nuclear matters. This was precipitated by a visit to Iran by A.Q. Khan, the head of Pakistan's clandestine uranium enrichment program. Moreover, according to Iranian opposition sources, Iran and Pakistan signed an agreement for joint development of nuclear weapons. Iran is said to be providing funding while Pakistan contributes through its expertise, including training Tehran's nuclear physicists at Pakistan's Institute for Nuclear Science and Technology.

It may be recalled that as early as in January 1987, Dr. Khan had attended a high level meeting of leading nuclear scientists in Iran, held in the Amir Kabir College. It is also believed that Dr. Khan had visited both Tehran and Bushehr in connection with the assessment of potentials of Iranian nuclear development programme. Since then there have been regular exchange of scientists between Pakistan and Iran for training and transferring of technical know-how. Dr. Khan, being the head of the Pakistani nuclear development programme must be the
driving force behind all such activities.

As far as transfer of missiles is concerned, North Korean links with Iran are widely acknowledged. This can not be ruled out that Dr. Khan, being an expert on imported missiles in Pakistan from North Korea, might readily play a scientific role between North Korea and Iran to serve the interest of North Korea as part of Pakistani barter arrangement with North Korea.

Pakistani soft corner for Saudi Arabia and Libya might be based on the fact that for long Islamabad has been receiving financial support to sustain its ambitious nuclear and missile development programmes. It cannot be ruled out that as against to the given help to Islamabad if the financier states get tempted to acquire missiles or nuclear know-how through Pakistan, Dr. Khan could play crucial role in such an arrangement.

Dr. Khan is also believed to have helped Iraq with its nuclear and missile efforts. A media report\(^\text{12}\) that mentions “Internal communications” between Iraqi security agencies seized by UN weapons inspectors apparently corroborate this belief. A few of these seized communications, reportedly made available to Indian security agencies too, had spelt out involvement of Khan extensively in the context of Iraq’s weapons programme.

An important defector from the Saddam’s regime, Lt. General Hussein Kamel, Saddam’s son-in-law and the then in-charge of the country’s nuclear weapons development programme, had passed on a document to the US. The document revealed that as early as in 1990, on the eve the US strike on Iraq, the Iraqi intelligence reportedly had sent a memo to the directorate of its nuclear weapons development programme concerning the offer made by Dr. A.Q. Khan to help Iraq in producing nuclear weapon. The UN officials reportedly retrieved the same document too. The memorandum of October 6, 1990 from Section B-15 of Iraqi intelligence to Section S-16 of the Nuclear weapons Directorate mentions a proposal from “Pakistani scientist Abd-al Qadeer Khan” to help Iraq “manufacture a nuclear weapon”.

Dr. Khan refuted it as “totally false and baseless”. But the literature on defence and strategic matters reveal that Iraqi officials both from intelligence and nuclear development programme had made several visits to Pakistan in early months of 1990. Frantic efforts were made to pursuade Pakistani scientists through bribes and Islamic sentiments. How far the involvement of the government agencies like ISI and key official functionaries from military and nuclear establishments of Pakistan could be for clandestinely supporting the Iraqi motivation may be guessed well from the prevailing nexus amongst the three agencies inside Pakistan to carry out unlawful acts of international proliferation.

**Conclusion :**
Movement of men and material relating to the spread of weapons of mass destruction has always been the matter of great concern to the advocates of nonproliferation. The rising number of rogue entities get further boost from money launderers and fundamentalist elements. The challenge ahead is how to monitor and control the illegal acts of both the state and non-state actors.

In case of Pakistan there lies a peculiar example of state sponsored illegal scientific practices. Dr. A.Q. Khan, the brain behind Pakistan’s nuclear and missile development programmes, holds vehement anti-India, anti-West feeling and strong leaning towards Islamic countries.

If a person of such high intellect and vision knowingly or unknowingly indulges in unlawful activities violating international proliferation norms, its ramifications could be dangerous for the stability and peace of the international security system.

One can assume that in case of shortage of enrichment material after the closure of Baghalchur uranium mines, Pakistan might be on the lookout for new sources both inside and outside the country. Having no options within the country, to outsource new opportunities Islamabad might be assigning the most difficult task to the most interested person in nuclear and missile technology- A.Q. Khan. In such circumstances, the overenthusiastic and emotional scientist with uncontrolled past experience, Dr. Khan can go to any extent to execute his assigned obligations.

The pattern of such acquisition embodies two facets of illegal transfer of nuclear weapons technology and equipments as – recipient and the exporter entities. Nuclear blackmailing manifests in the spread of weapons of mass destruction by wrong routes and enabled by nuclear irresponsible entities like Pakistan. Today, bringing to a halt to such practices should be the most important concern of the world community.

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*(For comments e-mail: rajeshkrmishra@hotmail.com [6]*)

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