



KHAN NETWORKS: EYES WIDE SHUT

Corera Gordon. Shopping for Bombs. Nuclear Proliferation, Global Insecurity, and Rise and Fall of the A.Q. Khan Network. Oxford University Press, 2006, 288 p.

Reviewed by Vladimir Orlov

Pal Sidhu, my fellow faculty member in the Geneva Center for Security Policy, never starts his presentations with a statement, but always puts a question first. Like this one: «Please tell me the names of those who created nuclear weapons in each of the nuclear states.» He lectures not to simple students, but to ambitious young diplomats and military officers from 30 different countries ready for a head start promotion. Many lecturers would envy having such listeners, who are always prepared for the class, who in fact do read the complete heap of recommended materials. Those people hush for a while... for a few voices to sound as one: A. Q. Khan, proud to boast of their IQ thanks to the A.Q. made notorious by the media.

They don't recollect Russian scientists Igor Kurchatov and Andrei Sakharov or, let's say, Otto Frisch and Edward Teller, and they definitely avoid mentioning Homi Bhabha, a fellow-citizen of their professor Pal Sidhu. Instead they name someone who didn't even play a decisive role in creating a bomb for his own country, but managed to have the notoriety of a world-wide scandal, which helped him to obtain the image of *the father of Pakistani bomb* not only with common people, but with experts as well.

FORGET HEROSTRATUS?

Gordon Corera, a British journalist, suggests *trying to understand* him instead of forgetting. Abdul Qadeer Khan, when understood within the context of his story, allows to understand the true story of nonproliferation. Oxford and Harvard did some good for Gordon Corera making him an exquisite narrator and a pernickety investigator (just look at his impressive and streamlined reference matter, or, to make it simple, references to other works, where he turns out to notice more than most observing experts). But they didn't turn his brain making him a sleek Mr. Know-It-All: Gordon Corera likes to put questions, penetrate into them, and doesn't consider wide-spread ideas to be set in stone. His current work for the BBC gave him the experience of *penetrating*.

The writer's talent to intrigue while keeping close to his thorough journalistic investigation, which should be free from speculations, and adding to that an outstanding number of *live* sources in the U.S. and U.K. intelligence community pave the road to success. («It reads like a thriller, but it is true!» exclaims Joseph S. Nye, Jr., while Ambassador Robert L. Gallucci writes the same words without ever seeing the review by the former. By the way, both are quoted in the book. Opinions of these two respected experts in nonproliferation would be enough to for me to finish my review.)

If A. Q. Khan did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him. Just to demonstrate what nuclear *proliferation* is about. It becomes especially prominent in *shopping for bombs*, possibly, one of the most serious and important books in today's literature on the subject.



I am not sure about the opinion of my colleague Pal Sidhu, who is sure to like the idea to de-demonize A. Q. Khan, but I will definitely make it a mandatory reading for my students in Geneva if they want to understand the springs and levers of nonproliferation mechanism as well as its contraposition, proliferation.

What is the common understanding of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)? If you never hammered at NPT chapters, you are sure to respond as follows: it is a situation when someone *shares*, proliferates their nuclear weapons and related expertise to others.

At the next level you are going to understand that India and Israel violate the nonproliferation regime, because now you will know that from the perspective of international law they seem to have no nuclear weapons, at least it would be unjustified to call them nuclear powers (it is here that those not in for mechanical learning start to stumble and... think). While A. Q. Khan gives us a seemingly ideal model of classic nuclear proliferation: *veni-vidi-vanish* (after having seen it with *Urenco*), then helping to make the bomb *at home* and then helping *others, the bad guys*, by proliferating his expertise (in fact, blueprints that looked Chinese) and even some of the required components, for which the malicious Dr. Evil finally has to pay: CIA and MI6 daredevils finally unveil his schemes and kick his neck. We also see here a vessel named *BBC China* (and that's quite something), with a German port as its home and an Antigua and Barbuda flag on its mast, a faint image of Muammar Gaddafi, and only miss James Bond sliding down a rope from a helicopter somewhere over Kahuta...

Gordon Corera managed to stand the temptation of following the *Bond scenario*. He doesn't play a role of tamed chronographer for the CIA *success story*, nor does he follow the easy path of *PR-servicing* his sources in the intelligence community («...the U.S. intelligence machinery [was] wrong in Iraq, both underestimating the danger before the 1991 Gulf War and overestimating it afterwards. The buildup of the Indian tests was missed, as was <...> the emergence of a North Korean enrichment program.» (p. 151). Without loading the narration with egghead stipulations, he pushes the reader towards the question: what kind of *international nonproliferation regime* can it be, when its key players always evert it to suit their narrow national needs?

There could have been no A. Q. Khan! Pakistan could have had no bomb! However, the arbiters of international nonproliferation, and here, for one thing, the United States (even though they formed an exotic union with China), decided otherwise. They didn't miss it, but they kept their *eyes wide shut*.

Gordon Corera demonstrates Oxford accuracy in unfolding his story. First, A. Q. Khan's early years to be followed by the customary *rise and fall*.

Gordon Corera's close and a little bit cold look make A. Q. appear to be no exaggerated and typical character, no victim or villain. He is a clever engineer, with passions of his own, love for money and motherland, trying to combine the two.

VANITY IN BULK

Thus, A. Q. Khan starts spying for Pakistan. In the Netherlands, where he works at the time (we are now in early 1970s with an oil crisis, an oil boom, India's *peaceful nuclear* explosion), the protagonist appears to be an equable family man, married to a South-African, often treats his coworkers at the uranium enrichment company to Oriental sweetmeats, and in 1974 starts quietly spying for Pakistan. Americans seem to twig the fact and report it to the Dutch... But *mission impossible* appears to be quite *possible* for A. Q. Khan, and the invaluable *Urenco* data are already in Islamabad (sorry, Zanger Committee, while the London Club isn't there yet).

Next—a combination of his scientific gift and that of a social climber allows A. Q. Khan to force back his rivals at home and step-by-step monopolize his force and his fame, and most importantly, the title of Pakistan's popular nuclear hero. Or, to be brief, the Father. Not that of a nation, then at least that of a bomb designed to defend and pull the nation together.

The book has many pages that could be quoted throughout and that have links to the Pakistani commotion of today, even though the stories they tell are over a quarter century old. Still, the most notable ones are those connected with Blair House, a VIP residence right across the street from the White House. Now (already in 1989) we are stunned together with Benazir Bhutto, the then-prime-minister of Pakistan, whose father has promised to eat his hat if that is needed for the country to have the bomb, as CIA officers deliver a presentation on the military nuclear industry of her country... that has never been shown to her by her own military: «What was truly shocking for Benazir Bhutto was that U.S. intelligence knew more about the nuclear program [of Pakistan] than she did. She had not even seen the bomb herself and she was being shown a model by the CIA.» (p. 51).

And the next day... The next day Benazir Bhutto meets President George H. W. Bush, who tells her that Pakistan would be certified by the U.S. administration as not having nuclear weapons for the purposes of reporting to Congress. Bhutto appears in Congress and says, «we do not possess not do we intend to make a nuclear device. That is our policy.»

«No one mentioned to Congress or the American public,» writes Gordon Corera, «that the CIA actually believed that the prime minister's confident statement was irrelevant and that Pakistan already had the bomb.» (p. 52).

That's the price of the *nonproliferation policy* when it comes to practice. Another analyst from the West would prefer not to take it any further. But Gordon Corera tries to find some cause-effect relationship: «For a crucial decade [for the Pakistani nuclear program], just as the nuclear program was gathering pace, [U.S.] proliferation was to be subordinated to broader priorities,» the main one consisted in «making the Soviets bleed» (pp. 30–31).

In fact, it wasn't about Pakistan itself, but rather about the neighboring Afghanistan. For a long decade Pakistan was made into a key U.S. ally outside NATO. An ally that would help in pushing the Soviet Union away from Central Asia. Now everything can be condoned, not to mention the nuclear program, and who is without sin, after all...

It must be said, the United States wanted some guarantees when it decided to keep a blind eye on the military nuclear program of Pakistan. First, not to build nuclear weapons, and stay at the threshold. Second, not to embarrass the United States. Third, not to transfer its nuclear expertise and technologies. When describing an episode of late 1970s, Robert Gallucci, who negotiated those conditions with the then-leader of Pakistan Zia-ul-Haq (whose strange death in an aircraft crash remains outside of Gordon Corera's scope: «died in an aircraft crash... circumstances unclear, no mechanical damage found on the plane,» that's all he says), adds «Zia clearly understood them. And he broke all three.» (pp. 31–32).

Looking at Pakistan as a stronghold to oppose the Soviet Union in Central and South Asia, the United States was ready to forgive anything. Consequently, officers of U.S. special services *following* the Pakistani military nuclear program would find that the regime in Pakistan, and A. Q. Khan as the driver of that program, were far better protected by the U.S. government than they were (p. 33). Among other things, the United States kept a blind eye on cooperation between A. Q. Khan and China, which Gordon Corera believes to have been «absolutely instrumental in assisting Pakistan's nuclear program» (p. 45).

Gordon Corera clearly understands that only because of double standards in nonproliferation Pakistan finally managed to become a *de facto* nuclear power. In 1990 Pakistan finds itself at the edge of a military conflict with India, while the U.S. Congress still hears the U.S. administration *certifying* Pakistan as not having nuclear weapons: «The notion that the United States could continue to certify there were no weapons when the country had nearly engaged in nuclear war made the whole exercise absurd. What if Pakistan had used the bomb? Whose head would be on the line for giving Congress and the American people the impression it didn't have the capability?» (p. 54).

Gordon Corera goes further, even though he is careful. Indeed, he is on a very unsure ground when elaborating on the role of Pakistan as a U.S. ally against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Indeed, there was a Soviet invasion. Indeed, the United States used Pakistan to force the Soviet Union out of Central Asia. Indeed, that was «an extraordinary triumph». What kind of a



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triumph was it if it would be followed by September 11, 2001, and then a U.S.-NATO invasion in Afghanistan? Was it that forward-looking to force the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan? What has it led to? What is the nature of Osama bin Laden? And who begat him? «Although the legacy [of U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union in Afghanistan] would be increasingly debated after September 11, 2001,» that is the only comment the author makes (p. 49).

Chapters on proliferation are saturated with facts no less than those on Pakistan. The author consistently looks into all corners of Khan's network: from Iraq to Libya, from North Korea to Iran.

Naturally, I am particularly interested in the part on Iran. Here, as in the rest of the book, Gordon Corera demonstrates admirable knowledge. Thus, he is quite fair in pointing out that a chance to dialogue with Iran was lost in spring 2003, when Iran made a secret approach to the United States (p. 166). Indeed, back then, during the short time span between May and August it was possible to solve that knot over Iran. Iranians were concerned if they would have even a limited possibility to enrich uranium. As for everything else, they were ready to make a concession. Washington responded with a categorical and even frightened *no*.

Gordon Corera is very careful about facts. He tries to avoid sensation where there could be none. In particular, he raises a question: did A. Q. Khan really transfer much important information to Iranians? Today, besides the Iranians themselves, the best answer is known by IAEA experts. However, reserved skepticism of Gordon Corera was very much appropriate back then—a year before IAEA got hold of Iranian reports on Pakistani traces.

Moreover, the author directly speaks about a failure of U.S. intelligence and the Department of State in analyzing sources of Iranian nuclear program. They fall for Russia and China as two countries helping Iran on the nuclear side. However, the focus on *David* led them to overlook *Goliath*: Pakistan and Iranian cooperation with A. Q. Khan (p. 62). «Pakistan was not on our radar screen... It was our assumption that <...> Pakistani-Iranian cooperation was not a significant factor,» the book quotes Robert Einhorn, an expert in diplomacy.

A story about Libya could be developed into a fancy detective story. Here again the author has his reserve, even if it seems to affect the dynamics of his narration. Gordon Corera does not allow any overexposure. His «Bomb shopping» features some most vivid characters, starting with Muammar Gaddafi himself, then his son Saif al-Islam... then Kussa Mussa, the head of intelligence, who opts for blue jeans and leather jackets during secret meetings in Geneva. More than that, the whole chapter «Dealing with Gaddafi» (pp. 176–195) is a fine example of civilized investigation journalism, comprising intrigue, details, references, and... respect to key sources that prefer to stay in the shade.

The author gives vent to his feelings applauding to MI6 and CIA officers, who finalize their life-work: they catch the *malicious proliferator* red-handed. But he cannot help asking a simple question that doesn't sound well together with the trumpets: what was Libya's nuclear program about, if Muammar Gaddafi exchanged it for international recognition of his regime and Tony Blair's handshake? A random set of centrifuges... rotors missing... enriching uranium? Far from that. The way Gordon Corera puts it, Libyan arsenal looks very much like a chaotic set of useless and expensive toys, which the Libyans could never put together for a dedicated military nuclear program, and even didn't intend to do it (but here a question mark should remain at least in the parenthesis). And definitely they were not yet close to the bomb (p. 223). Does it mean they knew they were buying materials from Khan network to exchange them later? Or a more complicated scheme: to frame someone?

And now Gordon Corera begins to outline an equation in one unknown, but what an unknown that is! It must be said, the unknown is *nearly* clear: Saudi Arabia. Some experts, while looking at Khan's network, add with meaning: we seem to see only the tip of an iceberg. And keep silence with the same meaning. Gordon Corera does not make any dramatic pauses, but tries to deal with facts. They are pretty scarce here if compared with other chapters. In 1994 we notice a Saudi diplomat, who later disappears (really disappears, no one has seen him since). He used to have a folder with 14,000 pages on Saudi interest to nuclear weapons. Some say the documents indicated that in the 1980s Saudi Arabia was ready to pay \$5 billion to Iraq for taking the trouble of developing nuclear weapons for it. It isn't that unlikely: back in the 1970s

Libya offered twice the amount to the Soviet Union for the same humble service. Others say CIA was aware of the deal. Still others believe the documents were not real (p. 234). The author beats about the bush of Saudi Arabia. He seems to have a certain understanding of tapped telephone contacts between the Pakistanis and the Saudis held via Dubai. He also knows the particulars of the Saudi-Chinese missile deal: indeed, why would the Kingdom purchase relatively inaccurate ballistic missiles CSS-2, which only make sense for WMD delivery (p. 97). Finally, he is aware of a possible secret agreement between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan «nuclear weapons for cheap oil» (p. 168), but not ready yet to make a conclusion, thus leaving us lost in conjectures as to Saudi intentions.

Gordon Corera doesn't pay much attention to Pakistani-Iraqi contacts. However, he mentions a notable top secret document of October 6, 1990 discovered at a chicken farm owned by Saddam Hussein's son-in-law Hussein Kamel. I remember, some ten years ago I happened to work with documents from that very chicken farm, they were about gyroscopes, though. The document mentioned by Gordon Corera contains a commercial offer by A. Q. Khan to develop nuclear weapons in Iraq. Saddam Hussein rejected it off hand concerned it could be a provocation by U.S. intelligence.

The author devotes many more pages to cooperation between A. Q. Khan and North Korea. However, after reading those, much remains foggy. Missile cooperation seems to be quite clear, while the nuclear one remains a question for me even after I have read the chapter. At some point (p. 93) Gordon Corera even presumes that one of six Pakistani nuclear tests in 1998 could have been done for the North Koreans. Here he really lacks sources that were so generous with particulars about Libya.

Gordon Corera very clearly understands what *A. Q. Khan network* is about. He puts into the limelight all of them: the German, the Swiss, the Ceylonese, and the South African. And he admits they were known not only to him, but to Western intelligence as well: their conversations had been tapped for decades. Still, special services preferred not to arrest them, but to monitor them instead (p. 112). During those decades they did not resort to black schemes, but rather ran a «grey-market» network—working through the holes in the existing export control regime and using a variety of techniques to disguise their activities (p. 118). A tricky question for the author here: how many people indeed worked for A. Q. Khan and how many were paid agents? What is the ratio? For some reason the United States failed to offer legal assistance to Switzerland in its case against a network member Friedrich Tinner living in a valley of Graubünden canton (p. 227). Could that be because he had been informing them about trade operations of «Khan and Co» distribution network?

The author has to skip a very important part in his streamlined story: Pakistan's own nuclear arsenal. What was A. Q. Khan's real contribution to building up its capacity? And another thing, more topical today: how well is the arsenal protected from unauthorized access and how well are Pakistani nuclear secrets guarded from terrorists?

The author admits (pp. 161–162) that documents found in Kabul made clear that Pakistani nuclear scientists had actually met with *the Taliban* and *Al Qaeda* to discuss the development of nuclear devices. No one has any definite knowledge as to how far the talks have gone. An even more interesting description is given to the paranoia of Pakistani military regarding cooperation with the United States and strengthening the country's military security. The author believes many in the Pakistani military establishment are convinced that the United States used to construe or does construe a clandestine operation to dismantle Pakistani nuclear arsenal. Am I right though when calling it paranoia? There is information that the United States several times considered forced nuclear disarmament of its closest ally outside NATO.

Meanwhile, the situation around the nuclear arsenal of Pakistan is following a totally different scenario. The United States pays tens of millions of dollars under classified budget items, about 100 million up to now,¹ only to keep Pakistani nuclear bombs in securely guarded areas without unauthorized access, while Pakistani military working with nuclear weapons should undergo proper training for and emergency. Seems to be part of the war on terror. But what about nonproliferation regulations? One thing is to ensure nuclear security in other nuclear states under NPT, such as France or Russia. And another thing is to help Pakistan, which



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remains outside NPT framework. Double standards again? Again erosion of nonproliferation regime?

WHOSE S.O.B?

The author does not confine to journalistic investigation. He is also interested in the future of nonproliferation, no less than in a specific case of a particular proliferator A. Q. Khan. He sounds pessimistic about it. He believes we are going to see more and more of dual nuclear technologies on the international market—that is what Khan's network has outlined and ignited. On the other hand, the author sees a growing interest towards military nuclear technologies, here again he sees A. Q. Khan's network as a major catalyst of the world trend (p. 241). A description of uranium enrichment program can be fitted onto several CDs, like the ones found in Libya when it was voluntarily *declared open*. Those data can be copied easily. When speaking about *secondary proliferation*, the author recollects, among other things (p. 137), a warning by Lieutenant General (ret.) Gennady Evstafiev, my colleague in the PIR Center, which he made back in the late 1990s in his official capacity regarding military exchanges between Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea. Experts gave due credit to his idea, while U.S. politicians hated hearing «Pakistan» in public. Any lessons learned?

Gordon Corera elaborates on those things by looking at the case of A. Q. Khan and Pakistan in the global context. His keen analytical approach now comes down to commonplace ideas about the threat of *world proliferation chain reaction*: if Iran gets the bomb, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are sure to join in. North Korean bomb proved by a test is believed by Gordon Corera (he wrote those lines before the test) to cause *shock waves* throughout Asia, including Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. However, North Korea had the test, while no one in the region seems to have followed. To say the least, each regional situation is special. How will the situation in the Middle East develop should it be proven seriously that Iranian nuclear program is military in its nature? Perhaps, here too, there will be no direct dependence, very much talked about by numerous adherents of *chain reaction* theory, which itself is a development of alarmism aimed at calling attention (maybe, exaggerating something, but with good intentions) to the dangers of global proliferation.

It happened so that my personal acquaintance with nuclear nonproliferation occurred 30 years ago, and again it was connected with A. Q. Khan. On a Sunday night there was *International Panorama* on TV with the most famous Soviet political observer Alexander Bovin, who focused on the Pakistani antihero. Soviet journalists tried hard to sound convincing about the double standards of Washington, which kept a blind eye on Pakistan stealing nuclear secrets and using them to quickly advance towards the bomb. They also told about a young Pakistani engineer, who had spent some useful time in the Netherlands, his name was mentioned. It means that even back then, 30 years ago, there was enough information to understand the scale of Pakistani military nuclear project. But if Soviet-American nonproliferation cooperation gave its fruit, however humble, on such tracks as Argentina or South Africa, Pakistan was part of the *big game*. Played by America alone, which saw no reason for Pakistan not to go nuclear: an S.O.B. after all, but it's *their own* S.O.B.

The Cold War is gone now. Some say, so are the dividing lines, and barriers on such issues as terrorism and nonproliferation have long been superseded by cooperation between the United States and Russia. Some say, and it even becomes commonplace, that the two countries will try to prevent any new cases of proliferation as it equally contradicts their core interests. Is it really true? Life is sure to offer new plot lines, and we will try them in practice. 

Note

¹ David Sagner, William Broad, "U.S. Aiding Pakistan on Nuclear Security," *International Herald Tribune*, November 19, 2007, p. 8. The article notes, among other things, that most of the money is spent on ensuring physical security.



MISSILES THAT MADE THE HISTORY

Vasily Lata. 32nd Kherson Red Banner Missile Division (They Defended the Motherland). Moscow: 2007, 544 p.

Reviewed by Midykhat Vildanov

This book takes a special place among the published memories and reports related to the Strategic Missile Forces (SMF) and written by the military. Its author is member of the Academy of Military Sciences, Prof. Dr. Vasily Lata. Lt. Gen. (ret.) Lata does not only present his recollections – he has managed to create a unique historical and analytical piece devoted to the development of the SMF, accomplishment of important military-political tasks, and particularities of service in the branch, where the author has passed through all stages, including key positions in the Supreme Staff. The book is based on personal archives of Gen. Lata, reminiscences of his fellow generals and officers from the 32nd missile division stationed in the town of Postava near Vitebsk in Belarus.

The book commemorates 85th anniversary of the first division commander Major General Vyacheslav Frontov, who passed World War II from the first to the last day, and is devoted to other veterans of the division and their families, who survived the hardships of military service.

Speaking about the reasons for writing the book, Vasily Lata points out, «Different memories do not provide for thorough analysis of revolutionary changes that took place in the missile units, when R-12, Pioner and Topol systems became operational. The 32nd division was one of the first to be equipped with such strategic offensive weapons. It may seem from the modern literature that behind this there were no people who passed through the hardships to serve their Motherland. Much has apparently been forgotten – Heroes of the Soviet Union, thousands of orders and medals of our country. But in fact, it was totally different...»

In June 2006 at the regular meeting of the division veterans, Vasily Lata decided to write a book about the mission of the unit, difficulties of service, people who formed the division, studied new weapons and maintained strategic shield of the nation. This book is about people who made history.

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The division was eventually established by July 1, 1960 – this is the Day of the Unit since then. The period of 1960–1976 was quite difficult for the state and the division – within less than two decades, the country has managed to set up the most powerful armed service of the U.S.S.R with advanced nuclear missiles. The 32nd division was part of the northwestern missile grouping.

As years passed by, the SMF developed smoothly, received new stationary and mobile missile systems. The author specifies five stages in the history of the SMF, all of which were connected with the history of the division. The stages involved the emergence of new tasks and new armament: R-12 – Pioner – Topol.



The author undertook serious efforts to analyze and publish some unique materials that were closed to public for a long time and depict the complexity of the military-political situation in the world and the process of Soviet decisionmaking with respect to development and serial production of nuclear weapons and delivery systems. One may read with great interest Resolution No. 1384–615 of the Soviet Council of Ministers of December 17, 1959 «*On establishing the post of the commander-in-chief of the Missile Forces within the Armed Forces of the U.S.S.R.*» This day is now marked as a day of founding of the Missile Forces. The resolution appointed Deputy Defense Minister, Chief Marshall of Artillery Mitrofan Nedelin to be the first Commander-in-Chief of the Missile Forces. Many documents mentioned in the book are connected with the production of missiles and here many curious facts can be found as well. For instance, the primary plant for the production of R-1 and R-2 missiles was based in Dnepropetrovsk. It manufactured 2,500 missiles per year. Today such amount seems incredible – eight missiles per day were made in the plant! It is worth comparing it with the production of RT-2PM2 (for mobile Topol-M systems) in Votkinsk – the plant can hardly supply one missile regiment per year.

DEFENDING THE REVOLUTION

An important episode in the history of the 32nd division was the participation of the 1st missile battalion of the 428th missile regiment (armed with R-12 systems) in the *Operation Anadyr*. The Cuban crisis is widely discussed in literature, there are opposite views on the advisability and outcome of the aforementioned operation. The conclusions made by the author should be taken into account, as they are still topical today.

First of all, the role of nuclear weapons in solving international conflicts became very clear and many nations began to strive for possessing nuclear weapons – this is still the case today and the situation requires some effective solution.

Secondly, the entire world could see the resoluteness of the parties to employ nuclear weapons in order to protect the interests of the state or its allies.

Thirdly, for the first time in its history Washington found itself in the situation of equal threat with the U.S.S.R. And the United States agreed that its huge nuclear and missile capabilities could hardly protect the people. According to some experts, in case of exchange of nuclear strikes with the Soviet Union, the Americans would lose about 80 million people. Since this damage was unacceptable, the U.S. leadership refrained from a force solution. As a result, the parity of fear emerged and none of the parties could expect to gain a victory.

Fourthly, both nations realized that political and diplomatic means should be more preferable, in order to settle the conflicts among nuclear-weapon states. The eventual settlement of the crisis could be noticed only when the U.S.S.R and the United States showed their readiness to come to an agreement – the compromise was found.

Thus, the SMF accomplished their major mission during the Cuban crisis – they became the key deterrence factor. After the crisis, foreign policy of both superpowers substantially changed. The division had also another experience of being on alert – it was on combat duty during the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Let us remind that afterwards the Soviet leadership did not put the SMF on high alert, even though in many cases the international situation would need this.

PIONEER AGAINST BOYSCOUT

Another stage in the development of the 32nd division (1977–1980) was its re-equipment – the personnel had to learn how to operate the Pioneer mobile missile system with the medium-range ballistic missiles. On pp. 101–115, one may find a lot of detailed information about the work carried out in the division to select and prepare the field positions, to study new weapons, to train the staff, to provide appropriate combat planning, and to construct social infrastructure. The pace of work of the military-industrial complex and the rate of supplies was higher

than the pace of building infrastructure. In some regiments the combat duty was organized at field positions until the end of construction of the points of permanent deployment. The missile system was, thus, unique and the author points out that such developments were caused by complexity of the military-political situation in Europe and rapid deployment of Pershing II missiles and cruise missiles there. It was necessary to maintain the strategic parity.

Lt. Gen. Lata mentions the preparation for *Zapad-81* strategic exercise, which was attended by defense ministers of the Warsaw Pact and commanded by Marshall Dmitry Ustinov. The exercise was aimed at demonstrating the might of the new generation of Soviet nuclear missiles – this should have been the demonstration not only for the allies, but also for NATO. Missile regiments had to overcome water barriers, move to long distances, camouflage, ensure security of the materiel, do reconnaissance, and provide for adequate logistics. The final stage involved dummy launches of missiles from field positions against an alleged adversary in Europe. The exercise proved high level of training of the personnel, safety and security of nuclear missiles. Gen. Lata assumes that the results of the exercises and combat capabilities of Pioner boosted NATO's decision on deployment of Pershing II in Europe.

MISSILE DIPLOMACY

Gen. Lata's experience of participation in the international negotiations on arms reduction treaties helps him to provide thorough analysis of these agreements. He pays particular attention to START I, which expires on December 5, 2009 – Chapter 7 of the book tells the story of the document.

According to the author, key efforts of the U.S. leadership, as far as the implementation of treaties is concerned, are targeted at the accomplishment of the goals set in the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review. It is a nuclear strategy that maintains, «In the event that U.S. relations with Russia significantly worsen in the future, the U.S. may need to revise its nuclear force levels and posture.»¹ To meet this requirement, the United States pays serious attention to the maintenance and modernization of the strategic offensive arms. Washington takes measures to circumvent or even to lift the restrictions of START I, since they impede the development of the aforementioned forces. The ceilings mentioned in the treaty were achieved by elimination of outdated missile systems (Minuteman and Poseidon), as well as early versions of B-52 heavy bombers.

Russian inspectors have discovered many violations of the START commitments at the U.S. nuclear weapon facilities. For instance, Washington illegally converts silos of the Minuteman III ICBMs into launch pads for new types of missiles at the Western missile range, conducts unverified flight tests of Trident II SLBMs, does not provide full telemetric data on flight tests of ICBMs, stations heavy bombers beyond the national territory without appropriate notice, denies the Russians the opportunity to conduct inspections, etc.

The Russian strategic nuclear forces carried out their commitments by eliminating unique types of strategic weapons, since the START arrangements imposed on Moscow special requirements under paragraph 2–4 of Article VII of START I and related protocols. These provisions envisage only elimination of ICBMs and expensive infrastructure of mobile missile systems under strict control of the U.S. inspectors.

It is known that at present, the parties carry out the Strategic Offensive Reduction (SORT) Treaty which implies the ceiling of 1,700–2,200 nuclear warheads for each country. For the United States such level is not a problem (most probably it will be 2,200), since it discharges the warheads and creates the reverse potential. For Russia, it will be again the elimination of unique and costly weapons.

The key conclusion made by Gen. Lata is that the provisions of START I do not fully comply with Russia's national security interests and this should be taken into account in the course of elaboration of new arms reduction agreements. Moreover, Russian and U.S. experts upon request of the presidents of both countries conduct the implementation review for START I, in order to assess the possibility of its extension and develop new parameters for future treaties.




Unfortunately, the author did not provide full description of the division activities in 1987–1991. I have to note that this was the time of fulfillment of the Soviet commitments under the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which entered into force on June 1, 1988. This task required accurate planning, to ensure smooth and safe removal from combat duty the Pioneer missile systems. It was necessary to ensure security and safety of missiles and warheads during their long-distance transportation to the dismantlement facilities, to prevent any environmental damage. Division commanders also had to take care of key specialists, social infrastructure, and maintenance of order and discipline of the personnel. In general, the treaty was implemented on time and in good faith, as many commissions and U.S. inspections proved.

At the same time, according to the Russian military and politicians, the INF Treaty was not beneficial for the U.S.S.R and has negative impact on Russia's national security as well. The author argues, «If the then leadership of the Soviet Union had been pragmatic in implementation of the INF Treaty and preserved two-three divisions with medium-range missiles in the west of the country, today we would not have had such cheeky deployment of missile defense elements in Poland and the Czech Republic. There would have been no need in the current statements of the Russian military-political leadership about possible withdrawal from the INF Treaty, reproduction of the modified missiles of this class and other asymmetric measures.» This conclusion of the author can be called into question.

By 1991 the division was planning to be rearmed with the new mobile missile systems – Topol. The unit had all preconditions for that – availability of specialists, their high skills, and military and social infrastructure. The first regiment to get new weapons was the 346th missile regiment, which got retraining at the missile range and began its combat duty in 1991.

However, in 1992 after the demise of the Soviet Union, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan signed the Lisbon Protocol to START I and refused to deploy nuclear weapons on their territory. Therefore, all weapons were to be transferred to the Russian territory. Missile regiments were moved to Russia and included in other missile divisions. As a result, the 32nd division stopped to exist at 10 a.m. on August 13, 1993.

The historical path of the 32nd missile division was going in ups and downs, but the division was always one of the leaders of the SMF. Obviously, such success was the result of hard service of the personnel. Many officers and warrant officers risked their health, did not allocate much of their time to families and did all their best to accomplish the tasks. Did they think about material gains or career when they spent day by day at combat duty, in the field, near the nuclear warheads? Certainly, no. They all believed that their service was needed to the state and to the Soviet people. Practically all soldiers, sergeants, warrant officers and officers of the 32nd missile division enjoy the right to say – they were pioneers in operating nuclear weapons and contributed a lot to the defense of our Motherland. The book commemorates their heroism and excellent service and conveys the story of the division to the young generation of missile officers. 

Note

¹ Nuclear Posture Review Report. Submitted to Congress on 31 December 2001. January 8, 2002, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm> (last visited on March 8, 2008).