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Quote of the Day

When all of these units are combined for the first time in our nation's history, we will have more than 20,000 men and women whose primary mission will be domestic catastrophic response.

—U.S. Assistant Defense Secretary **Paul McHale**, on plans to restructure the military's response to WMD attacks.

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Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon is campaigning in Germany for an agreement to allow New Delhi to import nuclear fuel (Manpreet Romana/Getty Images)

Indian Diplomats Fan Out to Build Support for Nuclear Deal

Indian officials have begun an international push to end a decades-long prohibition on the nation purchasing nuclear technology from foreign suppliers, Agence France-Presse reported today (see [GSN](#), July 23)...[Full Story](#)>>

U.S. to Expand Domestic WMD Response Forces

By Diane Barnes
Global Security Newswire

WASHINGTON — The United States has begun to reorganize its military response to a domestic WMD attack by establishing three widely dispersed groups, each numbering in the thousands (see [GSN](#), March 7)...[Full Story](#)>>

Iran Urges Merging of Nuclear Proposals

Iran's atomic energy chief Gholam Reza Aghazadeh today called for Iran and six world powers to combine their proposals to resolve global concerns over Tehran's nuclear ambitions, Deutsche Presse-Agentur reported (see [GSN](#), July 23)...[Full Story](#)>>

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Weapons of Mass Destruction

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By Diane Barnes
Global Security Newswire

WASHINGTON — The United States has begun to reorganize its military

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response to a domestic WMD attack by establishing three widely dispersed groups, each numbering in the thousands (see [GSN](#), March 7).

The first such force would include specialists in responding to chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear attacks — such as Army chemical decontamination and biological defense personnel — who were originally charged with working on Cold War battlefields.

That group, the WMD Consequence Management Response Force, is set to begin operating its first unit on U.S. soil for in October. The U.S. Northern Command would control the force, which would include personnel from a wide variety of military branches.

"This is historic," U.S. Assistant Defense Secretary Paul McHale told *Global Security Newswire*. "When all of these units are combined for the first time in our nation's history, we will have more than 20,000 men and women whose primary mission will be domestic catastrophic response."

It would likely arrive at the site of a major attack after smaller teams provide reconnaissance and initial response services.

First to an attacked site would be a state-based WMD Civil Support Team run by the National Guard. These teams are designed to mobilize within two or three hours of an attack to gather information about possible chemical, biological or radiological contamination (see [GSN](#), March 8).

Last December, the Pentagon certified the 53rd of 55 planned National Guard teams (see [GSN](#), Dec. 19, 2007). Congress has called for establishing at least one such team in each U.S. state and territory as well as the District of Columbia.

Drawing from information gathered by civil support teams, the governor of the attacked state could then choose to deploy one of 17 National Guard WMD Emergency Response Force Packages, units of about 300 troops that can perform decontamination and provide medical services.

Elements of the National Guard units might later be reassigned to work within the larger federal response forces, enabling the Pentagon to assert control over normally state-administered forces, the *Air Force Times* reported last month.

"What you [would] see is a coordinated deployment of military forces, some within the National Guard, some within the active-duty military, in order to achieve a unified military response to the requirements of the WMD event," McHale said, noting that the nature of an attack would determine which personnel are deployed.

"It is likely that the response of the [National Guard teams] would be measured in hours, it is probable that the main body of the [response force] would arrive within several days," he said.

When the larger group arrives, they would bring permanently assigned aviation crews to carry out search-and-rescue activities as well as specialists for extracting people from debris and medical workers.

To meet what McHale described as "a sobering mission requirement," mortuary specialists would be available to handle the contaminated remains of people killed in the attack (see [GSN](#), Nov. 13, 2003).

McHale said the response forces would demonstrate great flexibility.

"It might be that we experience an attack, for instance a nuclear detonation, that might require the assistance of more than one [response force]" or "we might have multiple chemical attacks that would involve the capabilities of less than one [team]," he said. He added that additional U.S. troops could be pulled from overseas if they are needed as reinforcements.

The Pentagon is still working on price estimates of the reorganization, but McHale said it cost roughly \$19 million to stage a 2007 exercise that involving roughly one-third of the forces contained in a response force grouping.

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The first grouping, ready to become operational in October, will probably incorporate more federal active-duty and reserve forces than the second and third groups, which would emphasize National Guard personnel. The Defense Department plans to prepare the second grouping in late 2009 followed by the third in late 2010, McHale said.

However, it remains uncertain whether personnel will be available to staff the second and third forces when the groups are scheduled to become operational, according to an April [report](#) by congressional investigators.

"Despite being the only set of capabilities dedicated to a [domestic] civil support plan, the [response force] has never been fully manned and equipped by the Defense Department because many of the units that would make up the force have been deployed to their wartime missions or because of other availability or sourcing issues," the Government Accountability Office report states.

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Malaysia to Expand Anti-WMD Patrol Areas

Malaysia plans to expand the patrol areas of maritime police along its coastlines in a new effort to combat terrorism, the *New Straits Times* reported (see [GSN](#), Feb. 27).

"We need to take strict action. Police boats will patrol coastal areas more frequently to shield the country against parties which have the intention of breaching the nation's peace and security," Police Inspector General Tan Sri Musa Hassan said, adding that police would identify high-risk areas where they would increase patrols.

The expanded police presence would include Malaysia's three-year-old Chemical, Biological, Radioactive and Nuclear response force, he said.

"We have seen anthrax threats in the country before. CBRN has been trained and specialized to handle such situations," he said (Fadhal Ghani, [New Straits Times](#), July 24).

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Czech Strategy Plays Down WMD, Missile Threats

The Czech Defense Ministry has ignored calls by Foreign Ministry officials to list weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles as high-priority threats in the country's new security strategy, CTK reported yesterday (see [GSN](#), Nov. 26, 2007).

The foreign ministry had urged the defense ministry to place WMD and missile attacks among the top threats the Czech Republic would face for the next 20 years, but the government gave them the lowest position of all threats listed, the *Pravo* newspaper reported.

The Defense Ministry said it had made the move, which has incensed foreign officials, to assign higher standings to more specific security threats ([CTK](#), July 23).

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Nuclear Weapons**Indian Diplomats Fan Out to Build Support for Nuclear Deal**

Indian officials have begun an international push to end a decades-long prohibition on the nation purchasing nuclear technology from foreign suppliers, Agence France-Presse reported today (see [GSN](#), July 23).

Envoys have departed New Delhi for Vienna, Berlin, Ireland and elsewhere to try to sustain new momentum created by this week's parliamentary vote of confidence for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The vote hinged on lawmakers' support for a tentative nuclear trade deal with the United States that would also create the conditions for other nations to provide nuclear technology.

The International Atomic Energy Agency's governing board has scheduled an Aug. 1 special meeting to discuss the terms for the agency to monitor India's civilian nuclear facilities. In exchange for access to foreign nuclear supplies, New Delhi has agreed to place its entire civilian nuclear sector under international supervision.

Should the IAEA board approve the inspections agreement, the 45-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group would next consider whether to exempt India from long-standing trade rules that bar key nuclear sales to nations that have not signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and do not allow monitoring of all their nuclear programs.

The Indian envoys have been dispatched to IAEA headquarters in Vienna to key capitals of NSG states, AFP reported.

They are seeking quick action in the hopes that the U.S. deal, which must be approved by Congress, can be completed before U.S. presidential and congressional elections in November.

There is "a very short time to deal with the questions raised at the IAEA and NSG," said former Indian diplomat Arundhati Ghosh. "The question is how strongly the countries supporting the deal will push for it. There will be spoilers" (Agence France-Presse I/[Google News](#), July 24).

The Bush administration vowed to work for rapid approval in the international bodies.

"It's getting down to the wire, that's why we have a sense of urgency about it," White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said yesterday.

"We are going to try to work with these communities closely in the next few weeks," she added. "There's still some steps that have to take place before our Congress can even take a vote on it" (Agence France-Presse II/[Economic Times](#), July 23).

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Iran Urges Merging of Nuclear Proposals

Iran's atomic energy chief Gholam Reza Aghazadeh today called for Iran and six world powers to combine their proposals to resolve global concerns over Tehran's nuclear ambitions, Deutsche Presse-Agentur reported (see [GSN](#), July 23).

Under a "freeze-for-freeze" arrangement proposed by the five permanent U.N. Security Council members and Germany, Tehran would not expand its uranium

enrichment program and the world powers would suspend efforts to impose new economic penalties on the Middle Eastern state while the sides arrange to negotiate a permanent halt to Iran's uranium enrichment program in exchange for political and diplomatic incentives.

An Iranian proposal put forward at multilateral discussions on Saturday calls for the sides to address diplomatic, financial and nuclear cooperation in three separate negotiation phases over a longer period.

"Naturally ... both papers should be blended into one," Aghazadeh said after meeting with International Atomic Energy Agency chief General Mohamed ElBaradei (Deutsche Presse-Agentur/[Monsters and Critics](#), July 24).

Meanwhile, U.S. Senator Barack Obama (D-III.) yesterday defended his presidential campaign pledge to consider holding direct negotiations with Iranian leaders over the country's nuclear activities, the Associated Press reported

"My whole goal in terms of having tough, serious direct diplomacy is not because I'm naive about the nature of any of these regimes. I'm not," he told reporters.

"It is because if we show ourselves willing to talk and to offer carrots and sticks in order to deal with these pressing problems, and if Iran then rejects any overtures of that sort, it puts us in a stronger position to mobilize the international community to ratchet up the pressure on Iran," he said (Matti Friedman, Associated Press/[Google News](#), July 23).

In a separate interview, Obama reiterated the threat that a nuclear-armed Iran would pose, ABC News reported.

"If Iran gets a nuclear weapon, it triggers a potential arms race, a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, that is not only life-threatening to Israel but it is a profound, a game-changing shift when it comes to our national security," he said.

The Democratic presidential candidate said he would not rule out a military strike against Iranian military facilities, but cautioned that the effectiveness of an attack would be limited.

"Iran is a big country. They have dispersed their nuclear capabilities in a way that you're not going to see smooth, surgical strikes solving the problem entirely the way that Israel was able to deal with Iraq's nuclear threat," he said, referring to Israel's 1981 attack on Iraq's Osirak reactor site. "What we have to do is avoid that choice by applying the tough diplomacy that makes the calculus for the Iranians different.

"We have a history of weak sanctions, weak inducements, that the Iranians ignore and the North Koreans before them ignored. And so we have this slow drift towards [Iranian] nuclear weapons becoming a fact of life," he said.

"We've got to get serious about tough sanctions" (Mooney/O'Keefe, [ABC News](#), July 23).

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North Korea Withholds Verification Pledge

North Korea did not address proposed terms for verifying its denuclearization at a meeting of top foreign officials from six nations yesterday, the Yonhap News Agency reported (see [GSN](#), July 23).

"It's important that we get a response," said U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who yesterday urged her North Korean counterpart to accept the terms at the six-party meeting in Singapore.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill called on North Korea Tuesday to accept verification terms by Aug. 10 in order for the United States to remove the Stalinist state from its terror watchdog list. However, Pak said North Korea would not move forward until it receives energy aid promised under the denuclearization agreement and the United States eliminates all sanctions on Pyongyang, according to Rice (Yonhap News Agency, July 24).

"I don't think the North Koreans left with any illusions about the fact that the ball is in their court and that everybody believes they have got to respond and respond positively on verification," she told journalists today.

"Nobody is going to trust the North Korean number they have given on plutonium they made. Fortunately, there are very good tried and true internationally recognized methods to verify the number of kilograms of plutonium made.

"This will have to be specific, it will have to have specific measures, it will have to have means for access and it will also have to have means to continue this process as new information becomes available," Rice said. "We have to have a protocol that allows us to know what has happened there and is still happening" (Sue Fleming, [Reuters](#), July 23).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday called for the participating countries to continue pushing the denuclearization process forward, Interfax reported.

"There is certain progress, but it is important for all the parties not to slow down and continue their efforts to comply with their commitments on a mutually dependent and comprehensive basis," he said after meeting privately with Rice (Interfax, July 23).

Yoo Ho-yeol, a professor at Korea University, said Pyongyang's slow response to the proposed verification terms is not surprising, the *Korea Herald* reported.

"Even the United States, entering the ministerial meeting, would not have expected to see any kind of immediate progress ... on a verification protocol," Yoo said. "The verification mechanism is something that needs more time, especially on the part of North Korea."

The North Korean foreign minister restated Pyongyang's position that South Korea should also be subject to antinuclear safeguards. One source said the official "did not make any comments that went beyond a reiteration of principles" (Lee Jo-hee, [Korea Herald](#), July 24).

Meanwhile, Hill is expected to visit the Vienna headquarters of the International Atomic Energy tomorrow to discuss the U.N. nuclear watchdog's role in monitoring North Korea's nuclear disablement (Pleming, Reuters).

Elsewhere, U.S. Senator Barack Obama (D-III.) told CBS yesterday that Bush administration policies had allowed North Korea to obtain eight nuclear warheads, the *Korea Times* reported.

"North Korea, when we weren't talking, developed eight nuclear weapons," the presidential candidate said. "And when we started talking, we've now arrived at a possibility where we could get those nuclear weapons and those systems dismantled."

Intelligence officials believe that North Korea possesses between five and 10 nuclear bombs ([Korea Times](#), July 24).

In Singapore, North Korea today signed a nonaggression pact with ASEAN member nations, the Associated Press reported (Associated Press/[Google News](#), July 24).

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Nuclear Deal Could Spark Arms Race, Pakistan Warns

Pakistan has warned that a tentative deal allowing India to import nuclear fuel and technology could exacerbate nuclear tensions between the regional rivals, the Associated Press reported yesterday (see [GSN](#), June 16).

In a letter dated last Friday and addressed to more than 60 nations, Pakistan warns that a pending arrangement for the International Atomic Energy Agency to conduct inspections of India's civilian nuclear sites would harm counterproliferation efforts and could "increase the chances of a nuclear arms race in the subcontinent."

Pakistan could vote against the safeguards agreement at an IAEA governing board meeting set for Aug. 1, AP reported.

The letter takes issue with the timing of the board meeting, which is scheduled to take place less than 45 days after the draft inspections deal was released to the board's 35 member nations. Pakistan said the move "is likely to set a precedent for other states which are not members of the [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty] and have military nuclear programs" (George Jahn, Associated Press/[Washington Post](#), July 23).

Meanwhile, U.S. lawmakers are challenging a proposal by U.S. President George W. Bush to reallocate roughly \$230 million in Pakistani counterterrorism aid to revamp the country's F-16 fighter jets, the *New York Times* reported.

The funding would account for about two-thirds of the military assistance Pakistan is expected to receive from Washington this year. Pakistan usually avoids using the planes to attack suspected terrorist enclaves, however, because such attacks are likely to harm civilians.

The U.S. State Department, which notified U.S. lawmakers of the proposal last week, said the upgrades would boost the accuracy of the jets for counterterrorism missions (Eric Schmitt, [New York Times](#), July 24).

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Russia Approves Changes to U.N. Nuclear Pact

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has signed off on revisions augmenting the U.N. Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, Interfax reported yesterday (see [GSN](#), July 3).

The revisions, adopted in 2005 by the pact's signatories, include a legally binding requirement that member states protect nuclear sites and civilian material that is being used, stored or moved, and expanded international cooperation in tracking down stolen and smuggled nuclear materials.

The upper house of Russia's parliament approved the measure July 11, allowing Medvedev to sign it into law (Interfax, July 23).

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Six Dead in B-52 Crash, Air Force Says

A U.S. B-52 strategic bomber killed all six airmen on board when it crashed in the Pacific Ocean off the island of Guam Monday, the Air Force said yesterday (see [GSN](#), July 22).

Search crews have recovered the bodies of two men killed in the crash and forensic experts are attempting to link other remains to members of the flight crew, the Air Force said in a statement.

A group of Air Force officers has launched an investigation into the crash, the Associated Press reported.

"Losing this bomber crew has been a tragedy felt by everyone here and across the Air Force," said Brig. Gen. Douglas Owens, who commands the 36th Wing at Andersen Air Force on Guam.

"It's extremely difficult to suspend this search," said Capt. Thomas Sparks, head of the Coast Guard's Guam division. "Our hearts go out to the families of the victims and the entire Coast Guard grieves for their loss" (Jaymes Song, Associated Press/[Washington Post](#), July 24).

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Missile Defense

Russia Rages Against U.S. Missile Defense Plans

Russian officials and analysts yesterday blasted U.S. plans to deploy missile defenses in Eastern Europe, questioning the sincerity of the Bush administration and the nature of the actual weapons to be installed (see [GSN](#), July 23).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov discussed the matter with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday in Singapore.

"We emphasized the necessity of actually bringing some clarity to the situation around the missile shield, in so much as the promises made to us by our U.S. colleagues for transparency and building trust have not as yet materialized into anything concrete and tangible," he told reporters.

Citing concerns over Iran's future ballistic missile capability, the Bush administration has sought to deploy 10 missile interceptors in Poland and a missile-tracking radar in the Czech Republic. Russian requests for confidence-building measures, such as allowing Russian officials to monitor the U.S. facilities on site, have so far been rebuffed (RIA Novosti, July 23).

One analyst suggested that the U.S. plans are actually an effort to deploy nuclear-armed missiles closer to Russian territory.

"I cannot see Iran having intercontinental missiles in the nearest future. Besides Iranian leaders are not so crazy as to attack the U.S. with one or two intercontinental missiles," said Alexander Khrumchikhin of the Institute of Political and Military Analysis.

"This is why there are suspicions that the silos that are being built will contain not antiballistic missiles, but medium-range missiles with nuclear warheads," he added.

Another analyst was less dramatic, but still questioned U.S. motives.

"The U.S. has been deliberately misleading throughout the process of NATO expansion," said Alexander Pikayev of the Institute of International Economic Relations. "The U.S. is going to build missile silos dozens of kilometers from our border. If they wanted to protect themselves from an Iranian attack, they would build silos closer to Iran" (Interfax, July 23).

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