

AQ KHAN ORGANIZES POLITICAL PARTY: WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

Perhaps proving that the recent attempts to prepare JEB! Bush for another political run was not the only movement in the world intended to rehabilitate a name with a nuclear level of toxicity, Pakistan's "Father of the Bomb", AQ Khan, has registered a new political party. The party is named Tehreek-e-Tahaffuz Pakistan, which Wikipedia says translates to "Movement for the Protection of Pakistan".

The Express Tribune brings us more details on the party:

TTP Secretary General Chaudhry Khurshid Zaman said Khan had yet to decide whether to stand himself for election. He added that as the chairman, Khan would guide the party through the campaign.

"Our party has been registered, we will take part in the elections with full strength," Zaman told AFP.

"The whole country is burning, price hikes, unemployment, the energy crisis, poverty and other heinous problems have made public life miserable."

"Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan has joined politics to change this face of Pakistan and he is the only hope. All other political parties have failed."

Rohail Akbar, TTP spokesman, said the party would form an alliance with right-wing parties, but not those in government or main opposition party Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

We get a slightly different take on the issue of Khan himself running as a candidate from

PakPakistan.org:

Dr. Khan said he did not plan, at the moment, to contest the election. However, further fruition of his political organization is "in the hands of God".

It would appear that the good doctor was paying attention to the number of Republican Presidential candidates in the US who stated during the primary that God wanted them to run. More from this same source on the religious connection:

He is considered as the star in Pakistan, while the religious right acclaims him for having created the "Islamic bomb".

A brief refresher on Khan's role in selling nuclear technology can be found at GlobalSecurity.org:

During the 1990s, there were intermittent clues from intelligence that AQ Khan was discussing the sale of nuclear technology to countries of concern. By early 2000, intelligence revealed that these were not isolated incidents. It became clear that Khan was at the centre of an international proliferation network. By April 2000, the UK Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) was noting that there was an evolving, and as yet incomplete, picture of the supply of uranium enrichment equipment to at least one customer in the Middle East, thought to be Libya, and evidence linking this activity to Khan.

A.Q. Khan's official career came to an abrupt end in March 2001, when he was suddenly was forced out as director of the nuclear lab by order of President Pervez Musharraf. Though Kahn was made a

special adviser to the government, the reason for his dismissal reportedly coincided with concerns about financial improprieties at the lab as well as general warnings from the United States to the Musharraf [sic] about Khan's proliferation activities. Musharraf's restraint in dealing with A.Q. Khan has been said to have resulted from the lack of incontrovertible evidence of proliferation activities. Nonetheless, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, in an article which appeared in the Financial Times on 01 June 2001, expressed concern that, "people who were employed by the nuclear agency and have retired" may be assisting North Korea with its nuclear program.

The change in position for A.Q. Khan did not necessarily end proliferation concerns. Indeed, while in Pakistan in October 2003, a US delegation led by Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage reportedly briefed Gen. Musharraf on A.Q. Khan activities. Gen. Abizaid, then head of US Central Command, reportedly conducted similar concerns to Pakistani political and military leaders.

With the international inspections of Iran's nuclear operations and the October 2003 interception of a ship headed for Libya and carrying centrifuge parts, Pakistan began seriously investigating A.Q. Khan. The United Nation's International Atomic Energy Agency in November 2003 itself warned Pakistan of possible nuclear leaks. After two months of investigations, in late January 2004 Pakistani officials concluded that two of the country's most senior nuclear scientists had black market contacts that supplied sensitive technology to Iran and Libya. Pakistani intelligence officials said the

scientists – A.Q. Khan and Mohammed Farooq – provided the help both directly and through a black market based in the Persian Gulf emirate of Dubai. Dr. Khan and Dr. Farooq were longtime colleagues at A.Q. Khan Research Laboratories. President Musharraf acknowledged that some scientists may have acted for their own personal gain, but he denied any government involvement and pledged harsh punishment for any person implicated in the scandal.

In “unrelated” news, Pakistan yesterday conducted yet another successful test of the nuclear-capable Hatf V Ghauri missile.

At any rate, just as it is surprising that in the US JEB! would be seen as a politically viable option after his disastrous Florida governorship and the trashing of the family name by his brother’s presidency, it is remarkable that Khan can be seen as worthy of heading a political party. While the legitimate question remains of whether nuclear proliferation in the Middle East stabilizes or destabilizes the region in the wake of Israel having nuclear capability, the methods by which Khan flaunted international law in his attempts to spread technology (and most likely enrich himself and his cronies) don’t argue well for him standing as a serious head of a party aimed at fighting corruption.